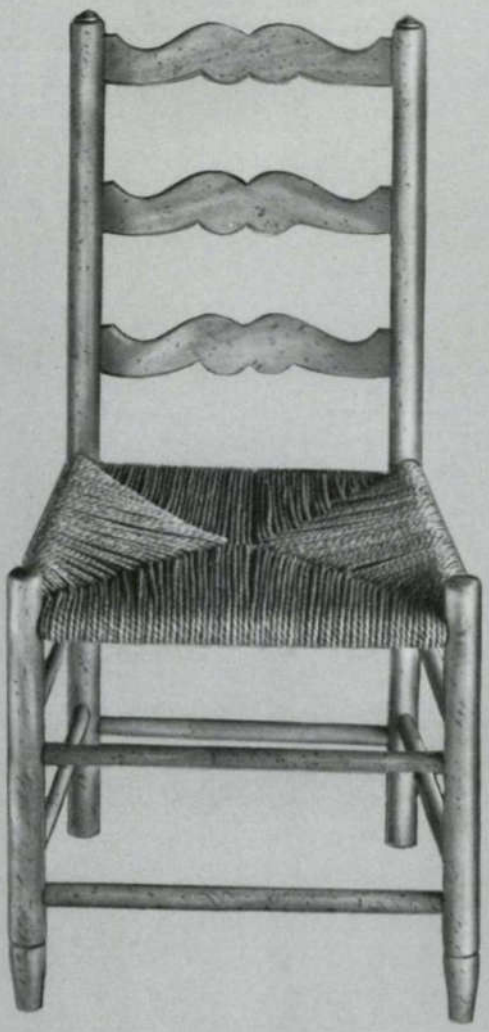
The Beaver

SUMMER 1976



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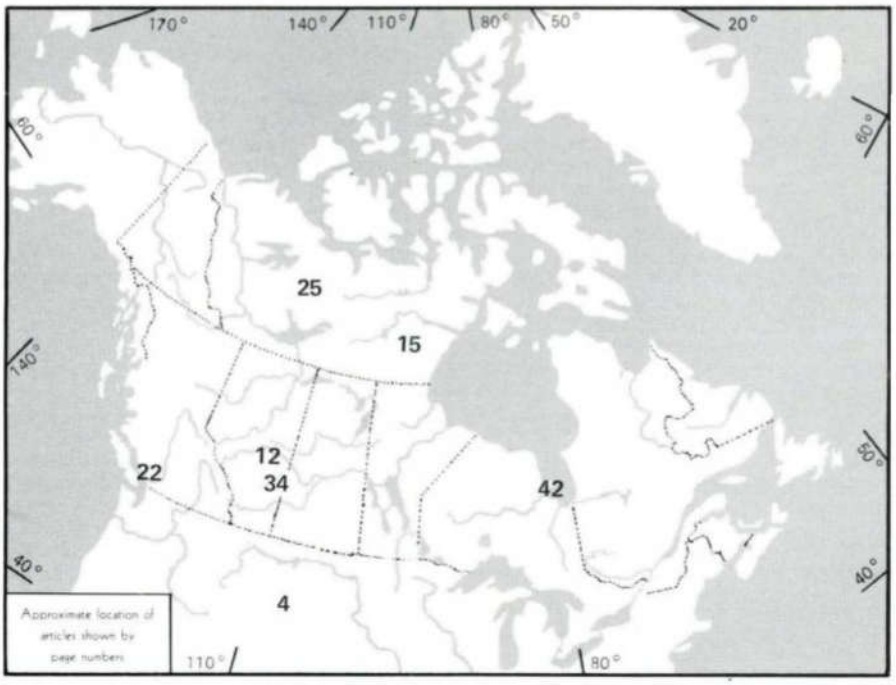

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COVER: 'The Medicine Man . . .' by G. P. Manley was exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, England in 1852. It is now part of the H B C Archives collection of art.

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One hundred years ago this June, General George Armstrong Custer rode into the battle of the Little Big Horn with adjutant William Cooke of Mount Pleasant, Ontario, by his side. Lieutenant Donald McIntosh of Montreal led his company in the first charge into the valley; some fifteen other Canadians, including regimental colour-bearer Sergeant John Vickory of Toronto and newspaper correspondent Mark Kellogg were with the Custer expedition.

The story of Canadian involvement in the battle and with the victorious Teton Sioux is told by C. Frank Turner, author of 'Across the Medicine Line' and manager of Editorial and Art Services for MacLean-Hunter, Toronto.

By C. Frank Turner

Custer and the Canadian Connections

William Winer Cooke, standing, is seen here with Tom Custer, the General's brother, and the Wadsworth sisters from Monroe, Michigan.

TEN DAYS AFTER THE BATTLE CRIES had faded from the Little Big Horn valley Ontario's leading newspapers received and front-paged the first reports of the Custer 'massacre' and of the faithful lieutenant who died at the general's side.

On 6 July 1876, *The Toronto Globe*, followed by *The Hamilton Spectator*, published sensational wire-service accounts, received via Salt Lake City and Chicago, of Sitting Bull's traumatic defeat of the Fighting Seventh, the pride of the U.S. Cavalry. In small type, and second on the official list of officers known to have been killed in action, was one name that, although not singled out for specific mention, had a special meaning for people in the upper echelons of Hamilton and Toronto society: William Winer Cooke.

A professional soldier from Mount Pleasant, a small community close to Brantford and industrial Hamilton, First Lieutenant (Brevet Lt Colonel) 'Willie' Cooke was the epitome of military glory, the advantaged son of Dr Alexander and Angeline Augusta Winer Cooke, and the grandson of John Winer, a prominent Hamilton wholesale druggist and politician. He was Custer's adjutant, his right-hand man, the one outsider closer to the Custer clan (three Custer brothers, a brother-in-law and a nephew were all killed in the fighting) than any other officer in the circle of regimental backbiting and ambition.

The revelation of young Willie's death (he was only thirty-one and had been a soldier for fourteen years) and his closeness to General Custer at the frenzied finale,

SOUTHWEST MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES

Kicking Bear's 'Battle of the Little Big Horn', a pictograph painted on muslin in 1898.

revived memories in Hamilton of a winter's day in 1869 when he had alighted from the Atlantic Express at the Great Western Railway station with a celebrated guest. With obvious pride Willie introduced his grandfather to his comrade-at-arms, the renowned Civil War cavalry general and *beau-sabreur* of the Indian wars, George Armstrong Custer. It was an occasion not readily forgotten. Off they went in John Winer's imposing carriage to his imposing home at the corner of then fashionable Walnut and Main Streets.

It had been the General's intention to visit for a few hours. He stayed a few days, agreeably flattered by the attentive social niceties and press attention.

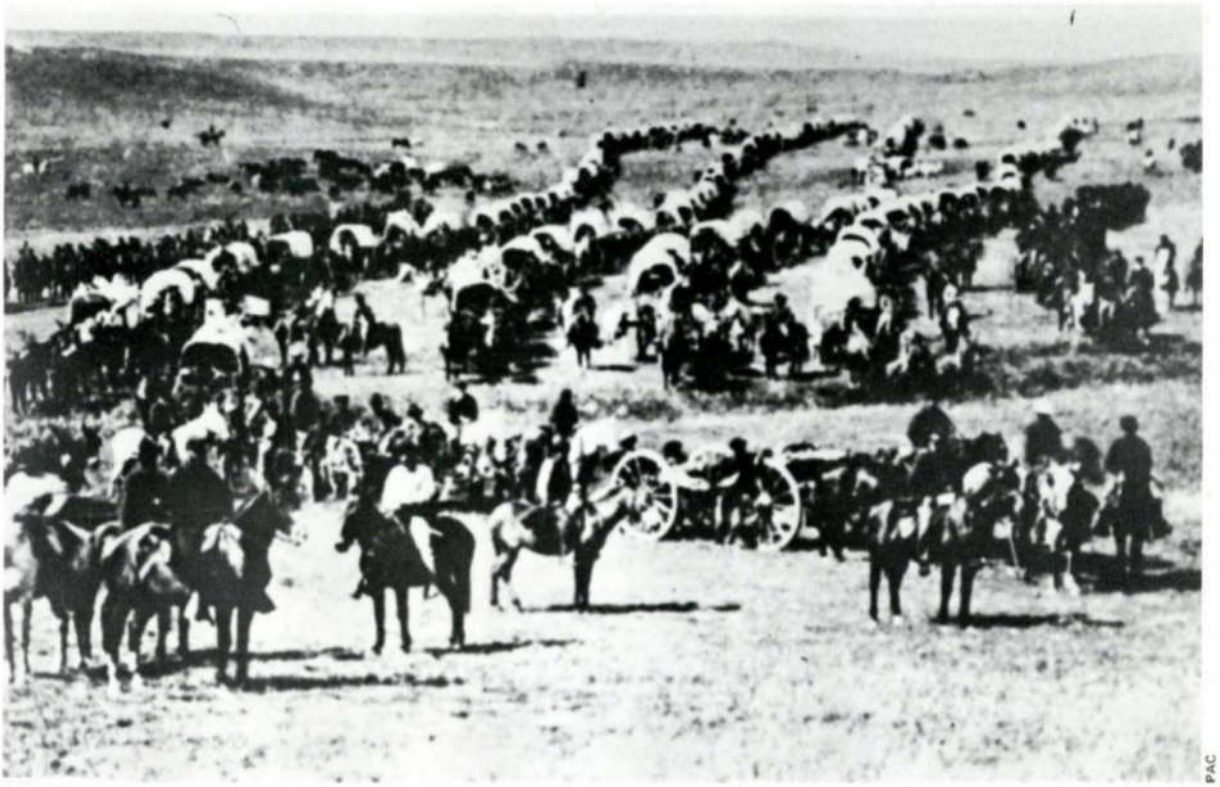
Willie, in his own way, was also outstanding. Of United Empire Loyalist stock, he was athletic, an expert sharpshooter, a ladies' man, and very noticeable for his long, bushy side-whiskers. He had always been more prone to action than study. When he attended Brantford Collegiate in 1859-60, he was noted by Dr George Bryce (who later was instrumental in the formation of Manitoba College) as a first-rate brawler who bested the town boys in the school yard with a wrestling hold of his own invention that he called the Grapevine. Shortly thereafter he was sent to Buffalo, New York, to regenerate his interest in his studies. The plan did not work.

When he was seventeen, in early 1863, he enlisted for adventure in the Civil War. At the recruiting office he said he was twenty-two. After quick promotion to sergeant he was mustered as a second lieutenant in the 24th New York Volunteer Cavalry and faced his first shot in 1864 near Richmond, Virginia. At Petersburg he was wounded in the leg. After weeks in hospital he had to be content with rear-echelon postings, although he managed to rejoin his regiment in time for more hostilities, notably at Dinwiddie and Sayler's Creek, before the war's end in 1865. He returned home to Brant County a hero, but quickly tired of the serenity.

In 1866, when he heard the Seventh Cavalry was being organized at Fort Riley, Kansas, for frontier duty, Cooke used his mother's considerable American connections, and with her ardent support, secured a commission with the regiment.

Willie Cooke's mother, Augusta, was a talented parlour musician, a dignified, almost pious socialite in the Victorian caste. Her ability to persuade gracefully would elevate her to the eminence of 'grande dame' in the mid-western United States, especially in the military nests.

Willie's appointment to the Seventh whetted their mutual desire for promotions and prestige. In 1868, while visiting in Georgetown, D.C., she penned a letter to U.S. President Andrew Johnson, Lincoln's successor. She asked the President for three brevet ranks for her son (captain, major, lieutenant-colonel) to recognize his volunteer services for the North in the war. 'Possessed of no political influence and dependent wholly upon his meritorious service and that sense of justice and honour which I feel assured controls your Excellency's public conduct, I place this matter in your hands with the utmost confidence that my prayer will be successful and



PAC

This is believed to be the last picture taken of the Seventh Cavalry as it moved in the early stages towards the Yellowstone River.

that you will nominate my son for the brevet ranks his services and good conduct entitle him to . . .' President Johnson, who had been impeached, and vindicated, but was politically weak, nevertheless acquiesced – as far as major.

Mrs Cooke had been more successful than General Custer, who had recommended Willie for a captaincy. General Ulysses Grant had not been influenced, letting it be known that other officers had stronger claims for promotion.

Willie, disappointed that he did not get lieutenant-colonelcy, had another trick up his sleeve. He wrote the Adjutant General and signed off as 'William W. Cooke, 1st Lieut 7th U.S. Cavalry, Brevet Lieut Col U.S.A.' The next letter he received from headquarters addressed him as lieutenant-colonel. (In actuality he was still a lieutenant).

Willie's determination, his rakishness, his impervious attitude to officialdom, all endeared him to the Custers who were similarly, and more radically, inclined. Willie – or sometimes Cookey – delighted to participate in their card parties and picnics and their theatricals and charades, favourite winter diversions of the General and his lady, 'Libbie'. This affinity and Willie's willingness to obey the General's orders no matter what (he was known as Custer's chief executioner of deserters, some shot down while begging for their lives) sealed his own fate at that June retribution in 1876.

At dawn Custer's scouts had warned him the regiment was dangerously close to an unusually large Indian encampment that was probably alerted to his advance. Custer did not hesitate. This was a chance for action and glory and political rewards. He split his force into three battalions, which would enable him to strike from two directions and cut off the Indians' escape. He himself would lead the main column of cavalry in a charge from the north. Another battalion of a hundred or so men would start the attack from the south, down on the flatlands where the river wound through the timber and where, unknown to the soldiers, arch-enemy Sitting Bull's own Hunkpapa bands of Sioux were located. The chief, the nominal political and spiritual leader of all the hostiles, had had a premonition of many soldiers falling on his camp several days before the 'Bluecoats' came recklessly towards his tipis on their big, lathering, soft, eastern horses. The valley was pitted and pitfalled with gopher-holes and prairie-dog mounds – and thousands of Indians.

Two other Canadians were riding to their destinies in this first assault which halted and faded when overwhelming numbers of warriors appeared out of the haze and dust. Unencumbered on their faster ponies, they outflanked the troopers who had no alternative but to fall back, eventually every man for himself, across the river and onto the bluffs.

From his conspicuous all-white horse Cooke had

There was Mohawk blood in the veins of Lt Donald McIntosh, son of John McIntosh, a HBC employee.

watched them briefly go into the fray after relaying Custer's orders – 'take a fast gait as you think prudent and then charge. You'll be supported by the whole outfit.' He did not see the outcome; he had rejoined Custer. There was no support because the General was galloping mostly out of sight behind the ridges to the other end of the encampment.

The fighting in the valley was an unmerciful crescendo. As Sitting Bull said in Canada many months later 'The women were flying birds, the bullets like humming bees.'

Company commander Lieutenant Donald McIntosh of Montreal and Vancouver, was in that first charge. McIntosh, whose grandfather had been Chief Trader Donald McIntosh of the Hudson's Bay Company, was proud of the traces of Mohawk blood in his veins, traces that could be detected in his eyes and complexion; yet here he was struggling for his life against the red men. Family fate was on the verge of repeating itself. His father, John McIntosh, a H B C employee, had been killed by a Sekani Indian at McLeod's Lake, B.C., in 1844.

Lt McIntosh, accustomed to the hellfire of the Civil War and campaigns on the plains, took cover in the riverside cottonwoods. The Sioux came on with bravado. McIntosh went down when his mount was killed by an arrow in the head. He grabbed a stray cavalry horse only to be wrestled from the saddle and clubbed to death.

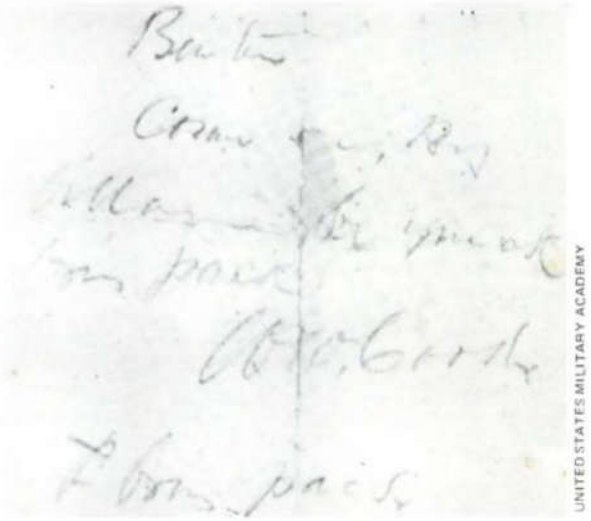
Jim Weeks from Halifax was in the same trap. A good-looking, fair-haired and blue-eyed trooper who had joined the U.S. Army in Boston to escape the monotony of labouring for a living, he reached the river unscathed. He scrambled across with some others to the highest bluff where he frantically piled up a protective mound of earth with a knife and tin cup. Now he could rest his single-shot Springfield for a better aim. He could not shield himself from the sun; nor could the other survivors. The wounded were in particular agony, moaning for water.

Young Jim, desperate as anyone for a drink, joined the volunteers in a dash to the river. The Sioux were shooting from the other side and covered the only approach. Jim, with protective fire from the men on the bluff, half crept down a coulee with a camp kettle in his grip. The last fifty feet, from the mouth of the coulee to the river, were wide open. He bolted and spread-eagled on the bank, immersing his head and the kettle in water. He turned around with the overflowing kettle, ran for his life across the flats back into the coulee and stumbled to the hilltop defences. There, he gave water to the wounded.

Weeks survived the carnage, a temporary lease on life. He deserted, was arrested in two weeks, and a year later was mortally wounded in a gunfight almost within sight and sound of his heroism.

There were no survivors in Custer's own battalion. With Adjutant William Cooke at his elbow, and five companies in his wake, Custer rode towards the Cheyenne circles of the three-mile-long village. The battle was brief around the ridge of sagebrush and prickly pear. The last of the soldiers were killed in close combat by a horde of warriors inside a barricade of dead horses. The last known communication to get out came from the hand of Cooke, who had scribbled the commander's futile message for reinforcements . . . 'Benteen. Come on. Big Village. Be Quick. Bring Packs. W. W. Cooke. P.S. Bring Pacs.'

The last communication to come out of the battle, written by W. W. Cooke.



UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

The Great Western Railway station in Hamilton where William Cooke arrived with his celebrated guest, General George Custer in 1869.

A water-colour of the west side of James Street in Hamilton as it would be known to the Cooke family in the 1860s.

METROPOLITAN TORONTO LIBRARY BOARD

Cooke's body was found near those of the General and the General's brother, Captain Tom Custer. Willie Cooke and Tom had been bachelor friends and shared an interest in the young Wadsworth sisters (from the Custers' hometown of Monroe, Michigan) whom the General and his wife delighted to invite to Fort Lincoln on the lower Missouri.

In the army's final casualty list Willie Cooke's name was next to the General's: as usual it was misspelled and appeared as Cook.

Years after the battle, when the Indians could talk of their achievements without fear of retaliation, a Cheyenne called Wooden Leg said he remembered scalping long, thick whiskers from the cheek of a soldier. He had tied this hair to an arrow shaft and carried it about, displaying it. Cooke, on the day of the battle, had Dundreary whiskers that drooped as far as the third row of breast buttons on his officer's tunic.

McIntosh, the first Canadian killed, was identified by a burial squad by his name on the buckskin shirt he was wearing. Two days after the battle he was interred where he had been found, in a shallow grave. A wooden identification stake was placed alongside. In July 1877 his remains were exhumed and reinterred in Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery. Thirty-two years later he was moved to Arlington. He was survived by his widow, Molly Garrett McIntosh. One sergeant eulogized him as a 'brave and faithful officer.'

Cooke's disinterred remains, in a rough box, arrived by train in Hamilton for final burial in August 1877. The cortege proceeded to Burlington Cemetery, on the heights near Dundurn Castle. For many years thereafter, on May 30, Decoration Day, the graveside was tended by Civil War veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic at their annual service of mourning. In their heyday there were a hundred of them, all from the Hamilton area.

Their local post was named after Cooke. In time, attendance decreased drastically; at the end of that era four old men stood by the unpretentious headstone and attempted to sing 'We're Tenting Tonight on the Old Camp Ground'.

The note for reinforcements that Cooke had pencilled hastily and handed to a messenger, survived. For years it was in the possession of a private collector. When it was advertised for sale at an auction, the military secured it. The crumpled piece of paper became a treasured item in the collection of Custer memorabilia at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, where General Custer was finally buried in 1877. Mysteriously a cheque for $182 that had been taken from the body of Cooke, came into the hands of an Indian agent at Fort Peck, Montana; it had been passed to him by a half-breed.

The Cooke-Custer family association did not end on the battlefield. Cooke's parents had moved to Chicago where the soldier's mother became socially prominent. A frequent guest at their Dearborn Avenue home was Elizabeth Bacon Custer, the widow of the General. Mrs Custer outlived her friend by thirty years. Up to her last days, in 1933, 'Libbie' Custer staunchly defended her husband's name against all comers who denounced the General's codes of conduct — both military and moral.

As far as can be now determined, 15 Canadians were with the Custer expedition — 14 subordinates and a civilian newspaper correspondent, Marcus (Mark) Kellogg who was reporting the action for one of the General's biggest boosters, the *New York Herald*.

Kellogg, from eastern Canada, was slain on what is now Custer's ridge. Nearby, in death, were five more Canadians in addition to Cooke: Sergeant John Vickory, the Toronto-born regimental colour-bearer, his right arm cut off at the shoulder; Privates Richard Saunders of Yarmouth; Montrealer Darwin Symms; Andrew Snow from the Maritimes; and French-Canadian Edmond Tessier.

Six Canadian volunteers survived the carnage because they were lucky enough to be delegated to the pack-train detail or were with companies not in Custer's immediate vicinity: Privates Thomas Seayers, a baker, was in the first attack and survived to be dishonourably discharged on a Court Martial order in '79 for desertion; Charles Orr, a house painter of 'good character' from Paris, Ontario; James Harris, also a painter, from Yarmouth; Frank Myers, a Quebec farmer who deserted six months after the battle; Montrealer John McShane, disabled by gunshot wounds and discharged in '77; and from St. Catharines, Ontario, George Anderson, a professional soldier described upon discharge as of 'excellent character'.

The most fortunate Canadian in the regiment was probably harness-maker George Hayward who was left behind in the Fort Lincoln hospital when the Seventh departed with the usual fanfare of band and parade.

This photograph of General George Armstrong Custer and his wife Libbie, dated 1864, is believed to be the first taken of the couple.

After the last shot had been fired on Custer ridge and after the few surviving cavalry horses had been rounded up, the Indians began to scatter. By roundabout routes, in bands and small groups, hundreds headed for Canada. In the spring of 1877 the principal war chiefs and their followers, with Sitting Bull leading the way, trundled in hardship and hunger into what is now southwest Saskatchewan.

They were expected, and were tracked, by the North West Mounted Police.

Nearly a century later, Mrs James Ogle of Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan, one of the direct descendants of the refugees, sturdy and alert for her eighty years, can recall the reminiscences of her relatives. Her first language is Dakota Sioux; her Indian name is Holy Breath.

'My mother was an Ogalala. She must have been eleven years old at that Custer time. She remembered when the battle was over they took off. They did not know where they were going, but she said they got to the Missouri. They went across with a pole. The horses swam. They kept on going and they got to the Cypress Hills. Then they came to Wood Mountain. When they got down here already the Mounted Policemen were settled in. All this hill was covered with Indians.

'My grandfather fought at the Little Big Horn. His name was Loves Wars (Wokicize-Ihakta). I knew an Indian here who was in the battle. Brave Heart (Cante-

Waditaka). 'Old Cy' the whites called him. He was a chief here. He died in 1934. He was seventy-nine. He used to tell us about the old days and the wars. After the battle, in a swamp, he told us that he saw a soldier's head coming out of the water and going under again. He went in and hit him with his gun and pushed him down in the water.'

From her mother, Mrs Ogle heard about Major Walsh (James Morrow), the police superintendent who more than any other Canadian official had the responsibility and suffered the hardships and consequences of controlling several thousand Sioux exiles, the pick of the warrior society, with Seventh Cavalry scalps on their belts, saddles on their captured horses and ponies, carbines in their hands, blue uniforms on their backs, pocket watches around their necks, and Custer guidons on their lances.

'My mother knew Walsh' Mrs Ogle relates. 'She says they were all wonderful, the police. When there was not enough food for the Indians, and when the children heard the meal whistle at the post, they ran to the barrack windows to watch the policemen eat. The police gave them hardtack biscuits and scraps . . . there were no white ladies in those days. The policemen want wives so they go around and pick the ones they want. They give the starving families groceries to get the girls.'

The Canadian Government's attitude towards the refugees was a great deal less benign. It was based on the premise that they should return, or be returned, to the United States. Whereas the Sioux might regard themselves, conveniently, as British Indians and be able to quote promises and produce King George the Third medals for services rendered by their grandfathers, Prime Ministers Macdonald and Mackenzie, while prone at times to display glimmers of humane understanding, were committed to the removal of the Sioux. Mackenzie even thought of inviting the United States Army to cross the border and round up their foe. Macdonald, during his terms of office, was constantly aggravated by the Americans who insisted Ottawa had the responsibility of curbing the Sioux along the frontier. His strategy was to deny the Sioux any sustenance or shelter so they would have to surrender to the American agencies for the sake of their children.

Major Walsh, whose affinity for the Indians was uncanny, whose respect of arch-hostile Sitting Bull was unfortunate, and whose rumoured amorous association with the chieftain's daughter scandalized his superiors in the force, was pummelled with criticism. Despite a chronic skin infection aggravated by his rough, precarious existence, he withstood the strains of dealing with Sitting Bull's henchmen who wanted to stay in Canada when everybody else wanted them out: the politicians, the U.S. military and his own commissioners.

The fortunes of Walsh inevitably deteriorated despite his protestations that he was endeavouring to persuade the Sioux to go home. In 1880 he was posted away from

Sitting Bull, who led his followers into what is now southwest Saskatchewan after the battle.

the scene. By this time he had attracted the personal displeasure and wrath of Macdonald who late in 1880 stated he had grave suspicions that the Major was not behaving in a straightforward manner.

'Walsh undoubtedly has influence with Bull which he tried to monopolize in order to make himself of importance and is, I fear, primarily, responsible for the Indians' unwillingness to leave Canada' Macdonald wrote Governor General Lord Lorne. By the end of the year the prime minister – sixty-five years old, ailing, and fighting for his Pacific Railway and prairie progress – was proposing drastic action.

'When this is over I think we must dispense with Major Walsh's services in the Mounted Police.'

In January 1881, Macdonald sent a further private letter to Lord Lorne: 'I greatly fear that Major Walsh is pulling the strings to prevent Bull from surrendering. Walsh is still at Brockville and I have given him two months' more leave to keep him there lest he might return and personally influence Sitting Bull.'

Macdonald said he regretted 'being obliged to play with this man Walsh as he deserves dismissal' but if he were cashiered he would at once go westwards and cause an imbroglio 'for he is a bold, desperate fellow.' The prime minister indicated again that when the time was right he would recommend that Walsh be summarily dismissed.

Walsh somehow survived in the force until 1883, two years after Sitting Bull's inglorious return to U.S. territory at Fort Buford. The dishevelled chief and his faithful-to-the-end few were transported down the

This young woman is believed to have been the daughter or niece of Sitting Bull.

Major James Morrow Walsh of the North West Mounted Police.

Missouri to Fort Yates, where another Canadian, James 'White Hair' McLaughlin of Cornwall, Ontario, a U.S. Indian agent, was destined to share a leading role in the final act of the Sitting Bull saga.

When the rumblings of the second Riel Rebellion startled Canada in 1885, Sitting Bull was being recruited for Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show.

Major Walsh, by this time in the coal business, was predicting to the press that not a shot would be fired by the Métis because they did not want to spill any blood, although they felt they had a grievance.

He excused himself later on. 'I did not think any official of the government would be so lost to reason as to bring on a war. These people are not rebels, they are but demanding justice. What great credit would it be to Canada to kill a few discontented half-breeds?'

Prime Minister Macdonald, however, had said in Parliament 'If you wait for a half-breed or an Indian to be contented, you may wait till the millennium.'

Walsh, the original sympathetic dispenser of the so-called police law along the border, claimed he had talked the Métis out of hostilities against the government in 1875. For the next five years, and especially after the arrival of the first Sioux hostiles in 1876, he had to juggle the balance of power to prevent the Métis and the Sioux from fighting each other or forming an alliance.

Sitting Bull, despite his series of aggravating and provocative actions, always professed his loyalty to the Queen. At the peak of his power in Canada, when his young men were obedient, healthy, well-armed and clamouring for action, the chief had suggested, unsuccessfully, that his formidable military resource could be used as an arm of the police. Much later on, in Toronto with Cody's extravaganza in 1885, old Bull revealed he had been approached by Riel (who was now a prisoner) fives times to join forces to overthrow white authority on the Canadian plains. 'I paid no attention to him and told Walsh and the police of his actions.'

If the government of Canada had allocated to the thousands of Teton Sioux dissidents a home and rations in Canada, if Sitting Bull's offers to support the police had been believed and heeded, it is unlikely that the Teton Sioux, on good terms with Crowfoot and his Blackfoot, would have hesitated to attack the Métis. And, the Northwest uprising, to put it bluntly, would probably have been peremptorily subdued, if indeed it had broken out at all.

If Canada had not been dedicated to the ouster of the Teton warriors through their impoverishment Riel, teaching school in Montana, might have stayed there and Sitting Bull would have settled peacefully in Saskatchewan with his impressive following. As it was, Riel was hanged. Sitting Bull became a thorn in the flesh of agent McLaughlin, and consequently, in 1890, during the Ghost Dance religious troubles, was slain while resisting arrest. Other warriors who had been in Canada during the 1870s were the principal disciples of the new religion and their agitation, and the flurry of retreat and alarm following Sitting Bull's death precipitated the Wounded Knee massacre, the last lingering scar on the white man's conscience. ◆

The Hermit of Good Hope

By Carl J. Buchanan

HE ARRIVED in the community one weekend in early summer. When the children came to school on Monday morning they were surprised and excited to see a tent pitched on top of the little knoll close beside the school fence. Alongside the tent was an old, high-wheeled, covered wagon, an exact duplicate of the ones used by the early pioneers in the wagon trains which rolled across the plains and deserts of the western United States during the late eighteen hundreds. As a matter of fact, the curved wooden hoops which supported the canvas of that old wagon were still stored as recently as 1972, in a shed on the property of a friend of mine in a small town in Alberta.

Down below the knoll, in a grassy depression alongside the road, a team of ponies was tethered on long ropes to graze. The lone occupant of the patched and battered tent was an old, old, hunchbacked man, small and skinny and frail-looking, with a long white beard, a seamed and wrinkled face and piercing blue eyes.

From whence he came no one had the faintest idea at first. He was a complete stranger in the community, but he was quite a talkative man and we soon learned that he had come from the district of Ardrossan, perhaps thirty miles away. He said that he had run a small store in that area, which had just recently burned down. Rumours which later circulated gave the impression that the fire had not been an accident; it had been set as a means of getting rid of him. Many people did not like his custom of settling on the road allowance; he did this because he had no property of his own.

He had saved a few items from the fire and putting his few meagre belongings into the old covered wagon, in which he claimed to have come to Alberta all the way from California, he hitched his team of ponies to the wagon and started looking for a new place to live. Thus he arrived in our little community.

He had never gone to school in his life, he said, and could not even write his own name. He had a daughter living in California, he claimed, and members of my family knew this to be true, for he received a letter from her about once or twice a year. The old man would bring the letter to my mother to have her read it to him, and she would write a letter for him in reply. In all her letters, his daughter begged him to come home to California to live with her so she could take care of him. In the answers, which he had my mother write, he always had some excuse for not going. We later came to realize that the only reason he would not go was because he simply could not bear to leave his beloved animals behind.

He was not allowed to live in his tent beside the school or to pasture his horses on the road allowance for long. The municipal authorities were quick to tell him that he could not live there. So he began to look around for a place to set up a permanent camp where no one would bother him. Some two miles from the school an old trail skirted the edge of a tract of wild land, which adjoined Elk Island National Park. This old trail ran along the foot of a steep hill, beside a small lake. The old man packed up his tent and his few belongings and moved to this spot, and very little was seen of him for several weeks. The amount of work which he accomplished during this period, especially for one so old and feeble, was astonishing to say the least.

With only his bare hands and a shovel, he attacked the side of that hill beside the old trail, and when he was through he had made a dugout in the bank, some twenty feet long and twelve or so feet wide. On the open side, which faced the lake, he erected a wall of small logs, and at the same time he built a partition into the structure which divided it into two rooms. Then he roofed it with stout poles, upon which he spread a layer of long grass. This he had cut with a scythe, raked up with a pitchfork, and hauled to the site with the team and wagon. The next step was to cover the pole roof with a thick layer of clay. The structure had only one small window opening which was covered with an empty flour sack. The doors were made from some old boards; he had scrounged them from who knows where. How that old man must have toiled, trying to build a home for himself and his team of horses, but at last it was finished, and though not in the least handsome to look at, it was quite adequate to protect him and his animals from the icy blasts of winter, soon to come.

He had two rooms, each about ten by twelve feet. In his living quarters he had dug a shelf along the length of the back wall, which served admirably for storing food. He constructed a table from some old pieces of board,

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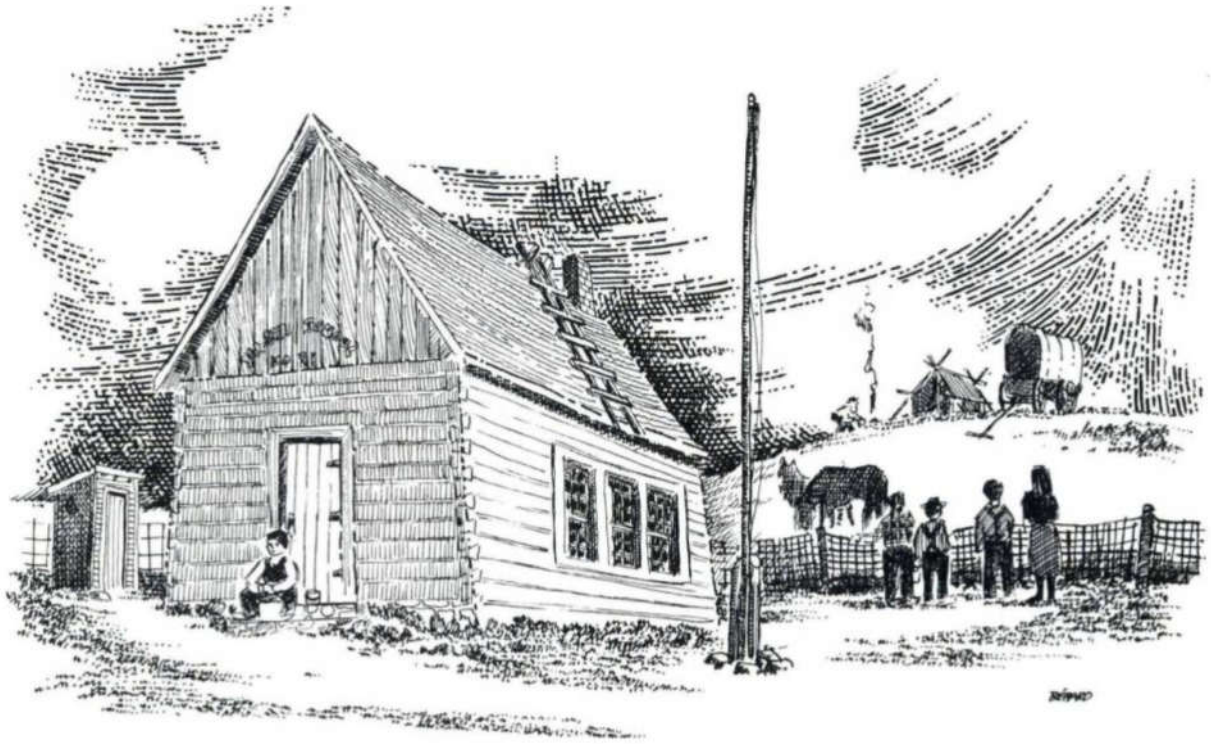
The author, a retired farmer living in Penticton, B.C. relates a memory of his childhood years in the district of Good Hope southeast of Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, around the year 1924.



'The lone occupant of the patched and battered tent was an old, old man'. Illustration by Réal Bérard.

had an apple box for a chair, and an old sheet-iron stove for cooking and heating. There was no bunk or bed, and hardly any room for one, but he had a couple of tanned horsehides which he spread on the floor, and rolled his blankets out on. In the morning they could be rolled up against the wall, leaving him more room to move around.

When the dugout was completed to his satisfaction, the old man turned his attention to cutting a winter's supply of hay, again with the scythe. He raked it up by hand, handled a wagonload at a time, and stacked it beside the dugout. His last major undertaking was a large supply of firewood. He laboured over this for many long, hard days, but finally he was ready to face his first winter, and well prepared at that.

After the old man had gotten himself settled in his new home, he came to our place often, always just before supper. It did not take him long to discover that our place was always a good bet around mealtimes. After he had his belly full of food, and it was simply amazing how much he could stow away at one sitting, he was ready to start telling stories of his adventures, and at this pastime he had no equal. Had he been able to write his stories down, he would undoubtedly have been one of the most outstanding authors of western fiction. While he was sheriff of Dodge City for twenty years, a rip-roaring cow-town full of cattle rustlers, stage-coach robbers, and evil gunslingers of every description, many died violently under the blazing guns of George Card – which was his name. Fierce gun battles in the mining camps of California took place during the gold rushes of 1849 and 1851. There were many more years as a prospector, trekking the awesome deserts and mountains of the western United States and battling howling blizzards in the Donner Pass while packing freight by mule train to the silver mines of Virginia City. He knew Jesse James and his gang, of course, and was a boon companion of Wyatt Earp. As a U.S. Marshal he had tamed many of the wild cow-towns of the West and there wasn't a faster man on the draw anywhere, as many an outlaw found to his sorrow.

He had also, he said, sailed the oceans of the world for some twenty-five years. My mother once remarked that if George Card had done all the things that he claimed to have done, over those periods of time, then he had been at it for at least one hundred and forty-five years. I failed to catch the significance of this at the time; I was only about six years old. I believed every word of his tales and listened avidly and wide-eyed with wonder, as he dispatched desperadoes with one well-placed shot through the heart, or downed an attacking grizzly which had come into his camp in the dead of night to steal his food and kill his mules.

He seemed to take a liking to me and was always pestering my parents to let him take me home to spend a

few days with him at the dugout. I was eager to go, of course, for I had seen his dugout, and thought to myself that it would be a thrill to live there with a man as famous as George Card, and to have him tell me stories at night while the coyotes howled in the wilderness around the dugout and the loons cried out their weird calls on the lonely little lake.

At last one night my parents finally consented to let me go and stay for a day or two. His abode was only a couple of miles from our place, so it didn't take too long for us to walk there, even in the pitch darkness of the night. It was quite late, probably close to midnight when we arrived at the dugout.

Old George unfastened the leather thong which held the door shut, but the door would not open more than a few inches. George started kicking the door and shouting 'Get up, Buck, get up.' There was no sound from within the dugout, and at last I asked him why he could not get the door open.

'Oh, I guess it's Buck' he replied. 'He was sick when I left, so I put him in the house so he would be more comfortable. I guess he must be sleeping.'

At this he began to push against the door with all his might, and I joined in. Slowly the crack widened until we finally had the door opened far enough, and by dint of much grunting and squirming George squeezed inside. Within a short time he had lit the old barn lantern, his only light, and I followed him inside. As I squeezed through the narrow opening, I stumbled over something and fell sprawling. In the dim glow of the smoky lantern, I could see that I had tripped over the legs of a horse. He was lying across the floor of the dugout, taking up most of the available space, and was about as dead as a horse could be. I was shocked and quite surprised to encounter a situation such as this; I had never even seen a live horse in a house before, let alone a dead one. I was further shocked to hear a whimpering sound. I looked at George and I saw that he was crying bitterly. He knelt and patted the dead animal, telling him how sorry he was that he had left him to die alone, and all the while the tears were dripping from the tip of his nose and making sizzling noises as they fell on the hot top of the lantern which he was holding in his hand. I felt sad and so sorry for the poor old man, for I remembered how I had felt when my little pup had died not too long before. I was a little puzzled, though, because I had never thought that grown-ups cared enough about animals to cry when they died. I knew that if it had been my father's horse, he would have cursed angrily, not because he loved the horse, but because he wouldn't have him to work for him any more. I knew my father did not love animals because he often beat them when he was angry. Maybe, I reflected, George loved his horses so much because they were all he had to love, and he talked to them all the time because they were all he had to talk to. Maybe too, I thought, if you talk to a horse a lot, he would get so he knew what you were telling him. My puppy seemed to know what a lot of things meant when I talked to him, and maybe horses were even smarter than dogs; maybe they knew what you said to them, but just didn't know how to answer back.

At last George composed himself and started preparations for getting the dead animal out of the dugout. The first thing we had to do was get him turned partly around so that we could get the door open. This was a formidable task for an aged man and one small boy, but with much pulling, tugging, and grunting, we finally managed to pull his rump back from the door and get him in a position where we could get a chain around his neck to pull him outside with the remaining horse. Old George then harnessed the other horse and hitched him to the chain and, bit by bit, with me tugging on the dead animal's back legs to avoid tearing the door-frame apart, we got him outside. The interior of the dugout was a mess, as there were a couple of mounds of horse manure to be cleaned up. This was finally done, and some clean hay was put on the floor to spread the bedroll on.

As I have stated before, George didn't have a bed or a bunk in the place so he rolled out the bedroll and we crawled wearily into bed at last, completely worn out from our exertions. Some time in the wee hours of the morning I could hear the poor old man crying again in the darkness for his lost horse. I wondered if someday the old man might die himself in this lonely place all alone; after all he must be pretty old if he was one hundred forty-five years old, as my mother had said. I thought how awful he would look, being pulled through the door with a chain around his neck and his tongue sticking out the side of his mouth, the way the horse's tongue had been.

No, I reflected, they don't do that with people when they die. They would pick him up gently and put him in a nice blue velvet box. They might even shave off his long white beard, so that people who knew him a long time ago would know who he was when he got to wherever he would go when he died.

I knew about the blue box because they had put my baby sister in one of them when she died a long time ago. My parents hadn't let us children get out of the democrat, but I had seen the blue box, which was very pretty. At the grave I had seen them put it inside another box with ropes on. I felt sad; I wasn't really sure what it meant to die, but I sensed that Marjory wasn't going to be with us any more. After the people had been standing around the grave for a while, two men had started to throw dirt into her grave with shovels, and the thumping sounds the lumps made when they fell down onto the box brought the reality of death to me with a cruel and devastating force. I had cried then because I couldn't stand to see them covering her up with dirt, in that hole in the ground.

The old man's crying had stopped now and I could hear him snoring gently. I burrowed down into the warm, wool blankets and slept. ◆

The Quangwak Affair

By W. O. Douglas

W.O. Douglas sailed into the Arctic in 1916, and served there for 17 years, first with the RNWMP, and then with the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1933 he transferred to Winnipeg to establish and supervise the Company's experimental fur farm at Bird's Hill. In this two-part series he tells the memorable story of Quangwak.

PART I

TO HAVE TRACKED down a murderer, arrested him, escorted him for eight thousand miles, and then in the end to have lost him, is an experience I will not forget.

In 1919 I was sergeant in charge of the Royal North West Mounted Police detachment at Cape Fullerton in the Northwest Territories. From this post, I was responsible for maintaining law and order over an enormous territory of several hundred thousand square miles.

I started off on my first patrol of the coast from Cape Fullerton to Chesterfield Inlet, a journey of eighty miles on sea ice, on 19 December. Shortly after the constable and I arrived at Chesterfield Solomon Ford, the Hudson's Bay Company manager, handed me a letter from his brother, H. T. (Harry) Ford, the Company's manager at Baker Lake. The contents of this letter changed my whole life, for it started off a chain of incidents which involved personal dangers to myself, much public notoriety, and my eventual resignation from the force.

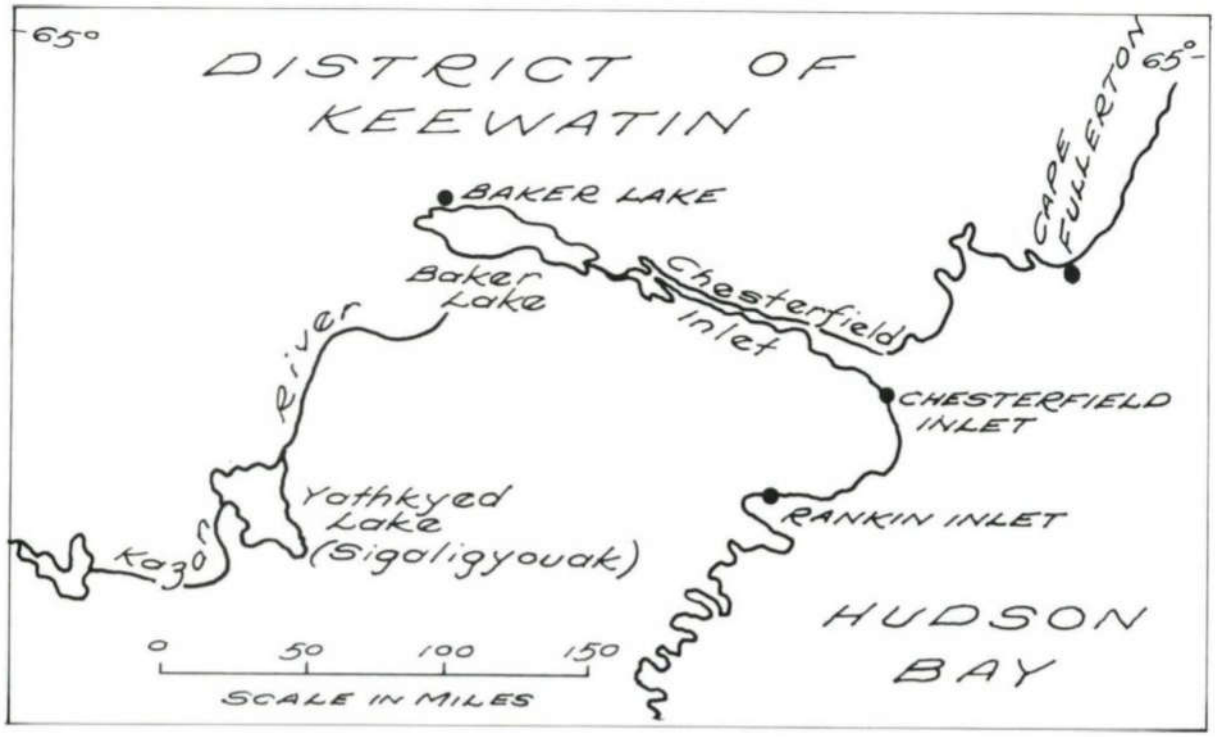
The letter informed me that a young Eskimo named Quangwak had murdered two men of his tribe, Angalookyouak and Alecummiek who were brothers, and had taken the wife of the former. Quangwak was now threatening the lives of anyone who informed the white men of his crime. It was also said that he would kill the first white man who was informed of the crime, so that this information would not be passed on to the authorities. Rumour succeeded rumour, with the result that the people of Baker Lake lived in terror. Men stood by with loaded rifles and even children ran to the shelter of the igloos when a sled was seen approaching the settlement. As a result trade was falling off; the people were afraid to go about their hunting, or even to visit the trading post from the outlying camps.

It was clearly my duty to set out for Baker Lake, there to find guides to take me to the scene of the crime at Sigaligyouak (Yathkyed) Lake where I would arrest the murderer and take him to justice. I sent the constable back to Fullerton to advise the other members of the force there as to what had happened. Accompanied by two natives, Police Joe and Quashak, I set out for Baker Lake. On arrival there it was evident that Ford had not over-stated conditions. Ford had spent his life amongst Eskimo people and was fluent in their language, but even his persuasive powers could not get me guides.

After a frustrating stay at Baker Lake, a nearly destitute man named Nigvik and his wife arrived. He had no rifle and the gift of one with five hundred rounds of ammunition and some food, soon persuaded him to guide us to the large lake which no white man had as yet visited. He assured us that we would get a friendly welcome from his chief. Without wasting any more time we left Baker Lake the next morning. We had two good dog-teams, with a third support team carrying dog feed for our return journey, and Nigvik and his wife with their own small team.

One morning, shortly after breaking camp, we came across sled tracks which took us to a camp of half-starved people, not an unusual condition in those days when the Inuit were totally dependent on game. What little food we could give was left there and we continued on our way. Nigvik informed me that we were nearing his chief's camp and soon we met a young Eskimo travelling with a small sled, who apparently, had been

Quangwak, who shot two brothers and took one of their wives, waits in Ottawa to be returned to the Arctic for trial.



sent out to intercept us. The man, a well-built, good-looking young fellow, had a rifle on his sled, the butt protruding from the skin case.

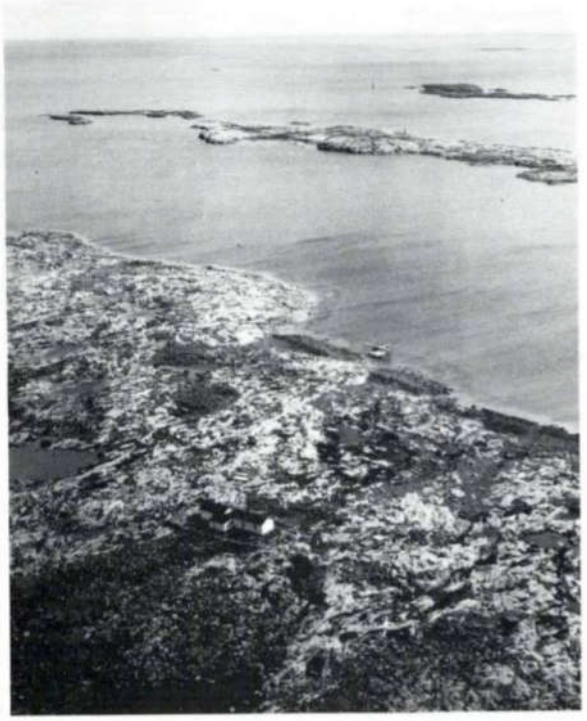
I had no rifle, handcuffs or leg irons, and told my men to stay away from their rifles, as one false move might cause trouble. The young man told us that he had been sent by his chief Eejoogajook to inquire who we were and what our business was. His orders were to bring back this information. I persuaded him to allow me to accompany him while my guides remained behind. With nothing more than the deerskin clothing I wore I arrived at the chief's camp. I was not allowed to enter the igloo until the chief had been informed of my arrival. None of the sullen-looking men standing around attempted to say a word, but I was determined this would be a friendly visit.

The young man returned and beckoned me to follow him along the long tunnel leading to the chief's snow-house. Tunnels branched off on either side leading to other igloos; it was a regular village under the snow. At the end of the tunnel was a wooden door in a frame. This was the entrance to the largest igloo I had ever seen. The dome was at least twenty feet from the floor; it had a diameter of about fifteen feet. The sleeping bench, covered thickly with deerskins, was two and a half feet higher than the floor level. The light came in from three large, clear, ice windows cut into the dome near the top.

My first impression on entering the igloo, apart from marvelling at its size, was the look of comfort and orderliness. Seated cross-legged on the sleeping bench was the younger of the chief's wives. Both wives were wearing fine new artiggis, long deerskin shirts with the hair inside next to the body and the outside skin decorated with beadwork. Eejoogajook was wearing his conjurer's belt of plaited deer sinews. From the belt was suspended strips of deerskin, pieces of cloth, a crow's foot, the dried head of a weasel and other things I could not identify. The belt is the symbol of the sorcerer's power and is only handled by him.

I sensed a tense atmosphere but advanced with outstretched hand towards the chief and, with my limited knowledge of the Eskimo language, tried to make the greeting as friendly as possible. The chief neither understood nor spoke English and seemed surprised at my attempt at his language. He then touched my hand, but did not grip it as we do. The women took charge of my outer clothing and beat the snow from the garment. The atmosphere was fast becoming friendly and I became convinced I had nothing to fear from this pleasant man. In my faltering Eskimo I managed to make the chief understand that my guides were still waiting for me. Eejoogajook ordered his young assistant to inform my men they might come into the camp.

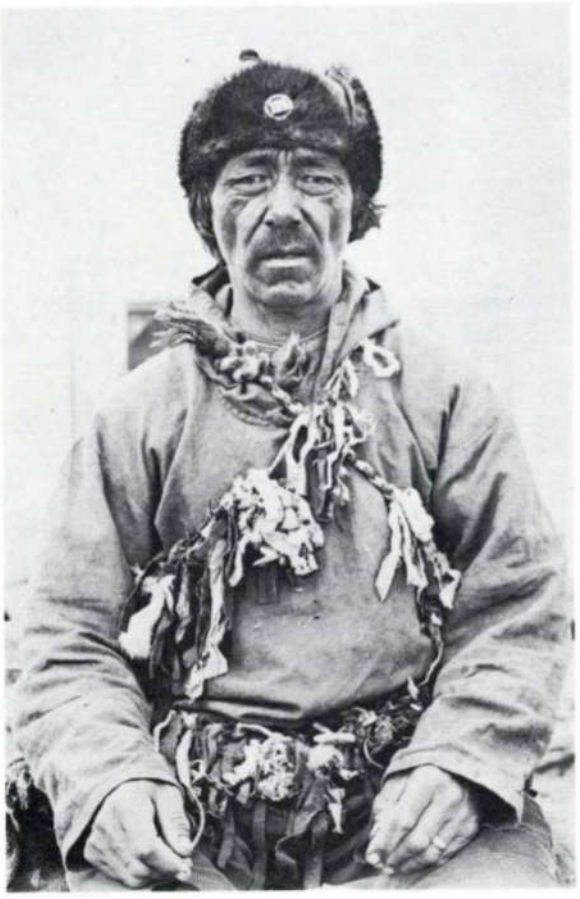
When Police Joe arrived, conversation between the chief and myself became much easier. We were invited to share the chief's igloo, but I declined this kind offer. My men built an igloo some distance from the others and out in the open. I began to understand their strategy when I noticed that they were carving peep-holes into



DEPT. NATIONAL DEFENCE

Cape Fullerton as it appeared from the air in 1930.

A conjurer's belt is worn by Akular of Baker Lake. From it he draws power and influence.



the snow walls. Police Joe and Quashak, both members of the Repulse Bay Aivilik tribe, assured me that the Padlermiuts, the members of the chief's tribe, were notoriously light-fingered, and that everything had to be taken into our snow-house. Then an invitation to eat with the chief arrived for me.

Police Joe accompanied me while Quashak remained in our igloo to look after things, although I did find out later that he had done some entertaining on his own while we were dining out. We found nine of the older men sitting cross-legged beside their chief; no women were present. My guide and I were placed on either side of the chief, who then called on the women. They arrived with a deer parchment to serve as a 'table cloth' and part of a thawed-out caribou carcass, minus legs and head. The animal, to judge by the moss still adhering to the carcass, had been killed in the summer, and cached away under stones as a winter delicacy.

Only three knives arrived with the meal; apparently the other guests had brought their own. The ceremonial part of the feast was performed by the chief. He sliced off a piece of meat, placed part of it in his mouth then sliced it off between his hand and his mouth and passed what remained for me to do the same. My guide was also given a piece and the pieces started to move from hand to hand in a circle. When the two pieces met, it was the signal for everyone to eat and this they did with great gusto. There were three 'side dishes'. We hacked and ate quack [frozen meat], nibbled at nibcoo [wind-dried deer meat], and toonnook [deer back fat]. What remained of the deer carcass was cut up and carried away by the women to other igloos.

In those days we white men travelling in the north had to carry such things as tobacco, matches, pipes, needles and small trinkets to pay for any hospitality given to us by the people. Each man in the snow-house was given a gift of a pipe, tobacco and matches. As presents for the women I gave the chief an assortment of needles, thimbles, beads and thread. Everyone present was lavish in his praise of our generosity and guttural thanks rumbled around the igloo. The chief expressed regret that he had been unable to give his guests tea. I took the hint and sent Joe for a pound of tea, a primus stove, large kettle, biscuits and molasses. I was pleased that Police Joe also brought back two mugs, when I saw the containers we would otherwise have had to use.

I then asked my interpreter to tell the chief why we had come. I asked if he were aware of the murder and did he know of Quangwak's whereabouts. Without the slightest embarrassment he replied that he did and that the murderer was now living a long day's travel from where we were. I then asked Eejoogajook if he would take me to Quangwak. Before replying the chief consulted the elders of the tribe. I watched their serious faces, and listened to much conversation which I did not understand. I had no alternative but to patiently await their decision.

An Eastern Arctic village of connecting snow-houses.

Eejoogajook, the respected leader of the Yathkyed Lake people, stands on the right.

Photographs are from the author's collection, except where noted.

Police Joe was by no means the best of interpreters, but between us we had worked out a communication system of English and Eskimo words and a great deal of jargon. However, his English was much better than my Eskimo. Eejoogajook, my interpreter said, would not guide me to the camp because he believed that Quangwak would not be taken alive. The Eskimos believed, he added, that once a killer always a killer, and that Quangwak, having already killed two men, would certainly not hesitate to kill another. His people were afraid, Eejoogajook continued, and were against his having anything to do with this murder. My guide was in full agreement with this decision and urged me to return home and come back with more policemen.

One man present volunteered the information that he had been told that Quangwak had been setting up snowmen and firing at them, calling his targets 'Pokeaktilik' the name given to us from the stripe on our trouser legs. This rumour may have been true but I questioned it, believing that it may have been another story intended to discourage me.

My guide, Police Joe, was proud of his name, and liked to work for us. I told him that if we failed to bring back Quangwak the Commissioner would not be pleased with either of us. On the other hand, if we were successful he would certainly be pleased. I convinced him that he should work very hard on the chief and seek his fullest co-operation. From then on he appeared to do a better job.

I had taken a liking to Eejoogajook and was really sorry that I could not converse fluently with him. Through my interpreter I let it be known that if I was unable to get a guide I would go and get Quangwak alone. If anything happened to my guide or to me, more policemen would come and investigate, in which case his refusal to help us would be considered unfriendly. The chief was now on the spot and I could see that he was not getting any support for the course I had proposed.

After another lengthy discussion the chief said he would take one of his young men and go and bring Quangwak back. He preferred that I remain behind as my appearance at Quangwak's camp might mean trouble. I was also to promise that I would not shoot Quangwak on his arrival. To prove my good faith I must hand over my rifles and those of my guides, until we left the chief's camp. I told the chief that any shooting that might occur would not be started by me or my guides. I gave him my word that Quangwak would be well treated by me and that, if I considered it necessary, I would take Quangwak back with me. If he came willingly he would be well taken care of. Under no consideration would I give up our rifles. The chief then agreed that he would leave in the early morning for Quangwak's camp. He expected to be gone one sleep.

Before returning to our own igloo I told Eejoogajook that I was not prepared to wait more than three sleeps. If he did not return in that time we would then go on

our own for Quangwak. We found Quashak still entertaining and when the last visitor had departed and we had placed the snow-block that served as a door in position I asked my interpreter what he thought. The reply was the usual 'Ahmayashook' [I don't know]. Then he went on to say in that weird jargon we used that he thought I had nothing to fear from Eejoogajook who wanted to help us; the trouble would be caused by Quangwak. 'They say him plenty bad man' was how Joe put it. I started to undress and get into my sleeping bag, but Joe thought it would be better not to, as I could 'gettum up more quick' with my clothes on.

When I saw my guides gazing through the peep-holes in the snow walls I gathered they were not too happy. They were to take turns throughout the night and had their rifles close at hand. In the early morning I was awakened by a tug at my pant leg and was asked by Joe to look out through the peep-hole. I saw quite a bit of activity. Then I saw someone leading a dog in harness and knew that the chief was about to depart. I had my guides make up a travelling ration of biscuits, tea and molasses, matches and tobacco, and also to take out one of our primus stoves with enough coal oil for the trip. This was well received with many 'thank you's'. They finally started off with a fine team of ten dogs, the chief being accompanied by the young man who had first met us.

With the chief safely on his way we returned to our igloo for the usual breakfast: bannocks, with a few currants added and fried in deep deer fat. When eaten hot these bannocks are really good. Later in the day we had a few visitors who did not come empty-handed. Some brought deer meat; others, tongues, marrow bones, wind-dried deer meat, and fine caribou-back steaks. These were all delicacies which I am sure would command good prices in the gourmet market. We traded with the men for dog-food, and the women brought very fine, soft deerskins which my guides bought, since such fine skins were not always obtainable on the coast where they lived. We had our deerskin boots resoled and small repairs done while we waited for the chief's return.

Our time of waiting was less than expected. In the early afternoon of the second day teams were seen approaching the encampment. One of the older men told me that Eejoogajook was returning and that he was bringing Quangwak. We thought it prudent to retire to our igloo until the fast-running teams had arrived. The chief had made good his promise and went to his own igloo accompanied by Quangwak and the young woman whom he had claimed as his wife after shooting her husband. The invitation soon arrived from the chief, inviting us to a feast. The messenger also suggested that a little tea and some biscuits would be most acceptable.

As an honoured guest, a place had been left for me by the chief's side. Except that Quangwak and his wife Cunuit were present there was little difference from the night of our arrival. However, I was now on 'speaking

Both of Eejoogajook's wives had new artiggis similar to this one worn by Attirak of Baker Lake.

terms', having eaten and smoked with them. The atmosphere was now much easier and more relaxed. The meat was brought in; the chief performed the appropriate ritual of thanks. Everyone watched as he carved the deer carcass. As usual, small stones and moss were adhering to it, since they had brought it from a summer cache.

I had shaken hands with Quangwak and his wife on entering, and gave him a pipe, matches and some tobacco, but he kept his eyes on me, very alert and frightened. However, his appetite did not seem affected; he also kept his wife well supplied with meat. After the last of the tea and biscuits had disappeared, and with the pipes going, I asked Quangwak through my interpreter if he knew who I was and why I was here. He replied that I was Kiuk [the red-haired one] and that I was a Pokeaktilik and that I had come to take him away because he had killed the two brothers Angalookyouak and Alecummick. He asked me what I was going to do with him. Was I going to shoot him as he had done the two brothers? I said that the only part I played in this was to take him to the 'Great White Chief' who would decide what punishment he was going to receive. If he came quietly we would have a very good trip; no one would hurt him in any way, and I would be with him all the time and would take good care of him.

Quangwak listened to all this, his eyes flashing between Police Joe and myself. He then spoke a few hurried words with Chief Eejoogajook, turned to my interpreter and said 'Tell Kiuk I will go with him and

bring my own dogs and sled, but my wife must come with me.' The last part of this short speech I was not prepared for, but I could see plainly that if I refused to take him without the woman there would be trouble, and this I was going to avoid. If trouble did develop the whole camp might range itself on his side and we were outnumbered ten to one. So I quickly agreed to this arrangement and the atmosphere cleared. Quangwak gave me a broad smile and thanked me, and my guides seemed much relieved.

Fully expecting this case would come to trial, perhaps in civilization, and knowing that Quangwak would be entitled to the services of a defence lawyer, possibly one who would grasp at straws, I now had to formally arrest Quangwak and give him the usual warning. I placed my hand on his shoulder and said 'Quangwak I arrest you in the name of the King and charge you with the murders of Alecummiek and Angalookyouak and anything you say will be written down to be used in evidence against you.'

I was quite satisfied that Quangwak understood this, but how much it meant to him is doubtful. Now I had a prisoner and no jail to put him in, a man who could survive alone in this country where I would perish. I told him that from now on he and I would be travelling companions and would stay very close together. Just how close and for how long I was to find out. From time to time the chief had been conversing with Quangwak and when I got up to leave Quangwak and his wife were at my side.

I realized how much I owed to the chief and gave him a gift of my highly-prized telescope which he had admired. I thought Eejoogajook was a very intelligent man, a fact that Knud Rasmussen, the eminent Danish scientist, confirmed a few years later when he visited this isolated tribe. In his book *Across Arctic America*, Rasmussen said 'of all the natives I have met on our expedition I think Eejoogajook is the most interesting and intelligent of them all.'

A sled is prepared for winter by 'mudding the runners' with peat. Water is then applied to give the runner a surface of ice.

Now that Quangwak was my prisoner, he and his wife willingly moved into our igloo. I had to sleep in the middle position on the snow bench, the only place where I could stretch out my six-foot one-inch frame. Quangwak and his wife were on one side; my guides on the other. Now that the tension had been removed a much different atmosphere prevailed in the encampment. Then, taking leave of our gracious host we started out for Baker Lake, the first stage of our journey back to Chesterfield. On March 5th, we met a group of half-starved people with whom we had to share what little food remained; finally we reached Chesterfield where I was informed of the illness of one of the constables; he had eaten fermented canned fruit.

On 11 March, accompanied by Ongwete and Quashak I set out for Cape Fullerton, leaving Quangwak's young wife for the time being at Chesterfield. On our way there we met a man who had his little finger torn off while harpooning a seal through a blowhole in the ice. I dressed the finger and promised to call in on the way back and bring some more dressings. At Fullerton we found the constable fully recovered and after a one-day stay to re-provision, accompanied by natives Noovea and Oolookchit, we started off on the first stage of our long journey to Fort Churchill. We left Chesterfield on 19 March and arrived at Churchill on 15 April. My guides were instructed to leave Quangwak's wife with her relatives who lived just north of Churchill, on their return journey to Fullerton.

I had not yet taken an official statement from Quangwak other than his verbal confession of the crime. My last chance to use the services of a qualified interpreter was at Churchill where an interpreter was kindly loaned to me by W. R. Mitchell, Hudson's Bay Company manager. Mitchell and his clerk, H. W. MacDonald, would witness the statement. I therefore took the following confession from the prisoner.

STATEMENT OF QUANGWAK

Native Eskimo of the Padlemiut Tribe

Taken this 17th. day of April, 1920, at Fort Churchill, Manitoba, by Sergeant W. O. Douglas before the undersigned members of the Hudson's Bay Company, Interpreter Alexander Oman, interpreter for the Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Churchill.

'My name is Quangwak, I am a Padlemiut. I do not know how old I am but I am old enough to have a wife. My home is at Shekoligyouak in the Baker Lake district.

My father and mother are both dead and I make my home with my married sister. According to the custom

of my tribe, I was given a wife a long time ago. She is only a child yet and is living with her people.

I did not like not having a woman old enough to live with me as I am old enough to have a wife and I wanted one.

At my camp I had four dogs belonging to a native named Apiotuk. Two brothers called Angalookyouak and Alecummiek wanted these dogs and were very angry because I would not give them the dogs. I heard it said in the camp that Angalookyouak would kill me.

One morning early in the hot weather, the moon before the ice starts to make in the lakes, I went to Angalookyouak's tent and looked in, and saw that he was alone in the tent and that he was in his bed and asleep. I went back to my tent and got my rifle, a 38/55 Winchester and went back to Angalookyouak's tent and shot him through the top of the head while he was still sleeping, he died quick.

When I had killed Angalookyouak I was afraid of his brother Alecummiek so I ran over to his tent which was quite close, opened up the flap and saw him sitting on his bed. I shot at him and hit him on the right shoulder, and he fell over dead.

After I shot these two brothers they were left in their tents for five days, this being the custom of the tribe, and at the end of that time they were buried. I helped to bury them and I left the rifle that I shot them with at the grave side.

I did not know that it was wrong to shoot these men, and that if I did so that the white men would come after me. I am sorry now that I did this and would not do it again.

I have travelled a lot with these two brothers, deer hunting winter and summer, and to the trade store at Baker Lake. During these trips I always got along with them very well, and there were never any angry words spoken. This is the first time I ever had any trouble with them.

After Angalookyouak was dead, I took his woman as I had no wife, and this woman had no people to go to close to, and all her people were at Churchill.'

The above is a true and correct interpretation of the statement of Quangwak to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed.....Alexander Oman – Interpreter
Signed.....W. R. Mitchell – Witness
Signed.....H. W. MacDonald – Witness

His X Mark
Quangwak

Witness Signed .....W. R. Mitchell
Witness Signed .....H. W. MacDonald

I made arrangements with the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Churchill for transportation to Port Nelson. When we arrived there on 23 April, I reported to the Officer Commanding the sub-division and was informed that another party would be going south in a few days and that I would join them. Three teams travelled to Kettle Rapids and from there to Mile 214 on the Hudson Bay Railway by hand car. At Mile 214 we took the train for The Pas.

Sergt W. O. Douglas in 1920, after bringing Quangwak south for trial. He escorted his prisoner north again in mid-July of that year.

On instructions received from the Officer Commanding Northern Saskatchewan, Quangwak had his preliminary hearing before Police Magistrate Frank Wales and was committed to the Dauphin Jail to await the fall assizes. I escorted the prisoner to Dauphin where I handed him over and obtained a receipt. I also took Quangwak's signed statement to the Clerk of the Court and obtained a receipt for that document.

By telegraph I was instructed by the Officer Commanding Northern Saskatchewan to report to Winnipeg to meet with the Deputy Attorney General. The Superintendent Commanding Northern Saskatchewan forwarded my report to the RCMP Commissioner in Ottawa. Soon I would receive further orders to report to the Commissioner in Ottawa. ◆

In Part II of "The Quangwak Affair", to be published in the Autumn 1976 issue, Douglas describes the return journey, the gathering of evidence of murder, and the events that led to the prisoner's death.

PAUL RAND'S WEST

BY DOUGLAS COLE

Dr Cole, Associate Professor, Department of History, Simon Fraser University, is co-author, with Maria Tippett of 'Desolation and Splendour: Changing Perceptions of the B.C. Landscape', soon to be published.

'Coal Diggers' and 'Zucca Harvest' are reproduced with permission of Mrs Paul Rand.

BEER-PARLOUR BRAWLS, miners at a coal-face, and war-time marrow harvesters provided the artist Paul Rand with subjects as representative of Western Canada as the landscapes of mountains, forests or sea. Whether painting figures, landscapes, or scenes of everyday life, Rand, whose work came to maturity in the 1930s, left a significant legacy to Canadian painting.

The artist was born in Bonn, Germany, in 1896, the son of a prosperous German accountant and his Swiss wife. After a year of art school in Frankfurt-am-Main, his father, who travelled frequently to America to audit books for several large German companies, offered the youth a tour of North America. With plans for a two-year visit, sixteen-year-old Rand arrived in July 1912 with gold worth two hundred dollars in his pocket. His sojourn lasted a lifetime.

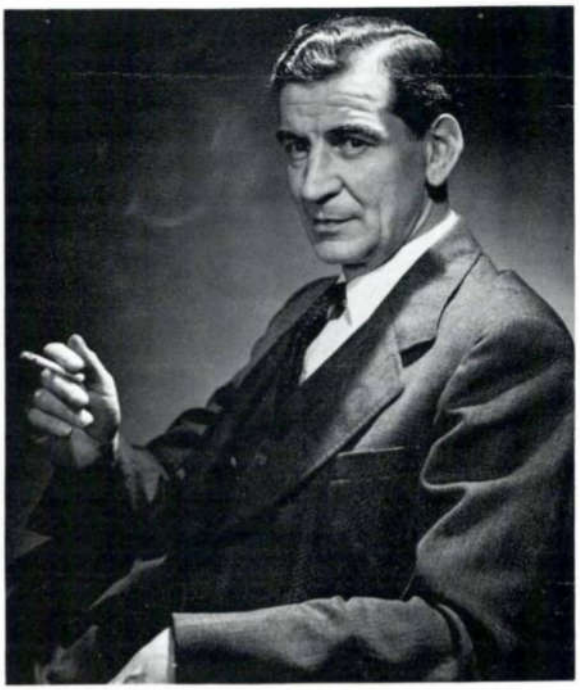
Rand was in Alberta when Canada joined the British Empire in declaring war on Germany. As an enemy alien, he was interned almost immediately and worked on ranches for the duration of the conflict. Unfortunately,

Coal Diggers, 1935.

his father, a patriot of the old school, could not understand his son's inability – and probable reluctance – to find his way back to Germany to fight for *Kaiser und Reich*. Cut off and repudiated by his father, Rand never saw his family or homeland again.

With the armistice, Rand, now twenty-three and fluent in English, settled in Coleman, Alberta, and worked in the building trades. The twenties were prosperous and construction flourished. In 1926 he crossed the mountains to Vancouver, continued to support himself as a carpenter and returned to the ambition of his youth – to be an artist.

He enrolled in evening classes at the Vancouver School of Art, founded in 1925. The school's principal, Charles H. Scott, had attracted a strong and creative instructional staff. Frederick H. Varley, the bohemian member of the Group of Seven, had come from Toronto to teach painting and life drawing. J. W. G. ('Jock') MacDonald was assisting Grace Melvin in instructing the



The artist Paul Rand.

Zucca Harvest, 1944.

'Sombre Skies, Anvil Island', from the collection of Maria Tippett.

students in design. Others such as W. P. Weston, the superb painter of mountains and tortured arbutuses, helped teach the night classes. The school offered a training perhaps unsurpassed in Canada at the time and Rand took full advantage of its opportunities. From Varley he learned the vital elements of colour, tone, and harmony; from MacDonald he acquired the fundamentals of design and from Weston, the form and line in nature.

By 1933 Rand was able to abandon the building trades and become a commercial artist, first on a freelance basis and then as a member of the art and design staff of the Vancouver *Sun*. In the meantime he qualified for Canadian citizenship and married a Canadian girl, Helena Barber.

Though Rand's days were absorbed in the practice of commercial art, he devoted much of his free time to painting, producing a body of work which, while not large, is impressive for its strong style. This is seen best in a 1935 painting of miners working in an Alberta coal vein, painted from his vivid memories of the mines at Coleman; the absence of grimy clothing and choking coal dust makes 'Coal Diggers' as much a study in line and form as a portrait of men at work. The angularity of the lines, especially the diagonals of light beams from the lanterns, and the solid forms of the miners' bodies and limbs make the study a landmark of Canadian art in the Depression years.

Rand's years in Coleman provided yet another remembered incident for artistic representation – a beer-parlour brawl. The beer parlours of Canada – gigantic barns with a sameness of smell and look, if not always character, set them far apart from the American tavern or the English pub. Fights were a part of the scene – especially in a mining town on a Saturday night. Rand caught the brawl with a photographic stop-action quality.

Despite these powerful pictures, Rand did not again approach the strength of his early 'Coal Diggers' until 1944 when, on a summer trip into the Okanagan, he was inspired by the sight of migrant field hands harvesting the gigantic zucca, a melon used for the manufacture of pectin. In two paintings, 'Zucca Harvest' and 'Picking the Zucca' he portrayed the workers with an intensity that succeeds by its impelling form.

His nude painting 'Rest' bears comparison to similar work by Edwin Holgate. Marian Anderson's visit to the city brought forth a portrait of the contralto singing from the old Civic Auditorium stage.

Paul Rand's feeling for western landscape was shown early in a water-colour of Crow's Nest Mountain, completed a few years after moving to Vancouver. It is a study of mass; the sky as voluminous as the mountain and its supporting hills. Rand developed a mastery of sky effects; at times his clouds reflect and radiate light, circling up to the centre of the canvas where they effect a luminous quality.

Rand's later works, while retaining strong and dramatic form, show the more peaceful and lyrical elements of the landscape; in quiet seas, silent driftwood, and the languid rhythm of lakes and hills, Rand found subjects for his love of nature.

In an oil painting of Howe Sound's Anvil Island, Rand caught the quiet serenity of the west coast. A darkly overcast sky and a rain-filled day convey sombre solemnity rather than depressing gloom.

Although Rand exhibited almost annually with the British Columbia Society of Artists, he sold only a few pictures. His commercial work with the *Sun* and then with Evergreen Press provided a livelihood; he painted for pleasure and fulfilment. A few collectors bought his landscapes, but beer-parlour brawls and sleeping nudes were not fashionable for genteel mantels. Even his strongly-designed coal-mining and zucca-harvesting pictures were thought unattractive as wall décor. He was pleased when Alexander Kipnis, a soloist with the Metropolitan Opera, happened upon a picture in Vancouver and took it back to New York.

Rand received his share of awards in the B.C. Society of Artists exhibitions, including a Bronze Medal in 1937. 'Coal Diggers' was selected by the National Gallery of Canada to tour South America, Australia and New Zealand with the Carnegie-sponsored Southern Dominions Exhibition in 1936-39. In 1965 Rand retired from commercial art; illness prevented him from much further painting before his death early in 1970.

Strangely, there are no Rand pictures in any public collection. Simon Fraser University in British Columbia organized a retrospective exhibition of his work in 1972, but even its collection is without a Rand painting. Now virtually unknown to collectors and historians, Rand has fallen into an obscurity that, judged from the strength, singularity, and versatility of his painting, is ill-deserved.◆

Seven Rivers North

By Alex M. Hall
and Dennis R. Voigt

The authors Hall and Voigt are wildlife biologists. Voigt is with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources; Hall has formed 'Canoe Arctic Inc', a professional guiding and outfitting business in the Northwest territories. Photographs are by the authors.

Young gyrfalcons at Smart Lake on Hanbury River.

ON 4 JUNE 1973 we stood alone on the Saskatchewan-Northwest Territories border some fifty miles above Lake Athabasca, and watched our chartered float plane lift off the unnamed lake and disappear into low clouds scudding in from the north. Over the next seventy-seven days we would paddle our canoe north out of the forest, then across the Barren Grounds to the community of Coppermine on the Arctic Coast. The principal part of our 1,150 mile route lay along seven rivers: the Dubawnt, Elk, Thelon, Mary Frances, Hanbury, Lockhart, and Coppermine.

Our preparations during the previous winter had included a review of both the historical and modern accounts of travel on the Lockhart and Coppermine Rivers. Famous among these is Sir John Franklin's classic narrative of his expedition down the Coppermine in 1821; this is still the most detailed description available of the great river. In the historical sense, only two small sections of the initial five hundred miles of our route had been roads of discovery. J. W. Tyrrell had ascended the Thelon River to the mouth of the Elk River in 1900 and Guy Blanchet (*The Beaver*, Sept. 1949) had explored the upper Dubawnt River in 1925. However, we found their descriptions almost entirely lacking in navigational information.

So it was with a sense of exploring and of facing the unknown that we set out, trying to deduce what we could from the maps. By descending the upper Dubawnt and Elk Rivers early in the season, we hoped that water volumes would be sufficient to permit an easy passage down their gradients. There was a great deal of country to be covered, and we knew from the outset that we had to average one hundred miles per week if we were to reach our destination before the brief arctic summer ended. Apart from the Coppermine River, our route was not geared for speed. Travel between rivers, the ascent of the Lockhart River, and a three-hundred-foot climb up a fifteen-mile stretch of the Mary Frances River would all consume valuable time. Then there were the big lakes where we could be wind-bound for days at a time, or immobilized by ice any time before mid-July. An early northern spring, however, did much to allay our fears of being held up by lake ice early in the trip.

We began with a forty-mile push through a maze of small lakes to catch the head waters of the Dubawnt River flowing northeast into the Barrens. Our seventeen-foot aluminum canoe loaded down with packsacks full of food and equipment made for slow going here as everything had to be transported over the many portages in three loads. Pleasant park-like country compensated for the hard work. The lakes were clear and the surrounding low, sandy hills supported well-spaced spruce trees over a thick carpet of lichen. A profuse network of trails woven over the landscape showed that this was prime winter range for barren-ground caribou. Wolf scats bristling with the hair of these northern deer were scattered along the trails, and sometimes we found the bleached bones of the prey, or an occasional display of

massive antlers still attached to a skull. Although our initial progress was slow, the combination of caribou trails and open spruce-lichen woodland with its absence of underbrush permitted direct and easy passage between lakes.

When we entered the Dubawnt River we were confronted with a sandy esker that had shaken off the forest except for a few perfectly-formed spruce trees sprinkled along its heights. The Dubawnt valley was comparatively lush and its forest was less open. Thickets of willow, dwarf birch, and alder were a more common sight; the river itself was interspersed with small marshes. Mallards and pintails flashed along the river edges; mergansers, a few scaup, and large flocks of scoters scuttered across the pools below fast water; then, in a widening, we stopped to watch four bald eagles fishing over some rocky shoals. Late in the afternoon we made camp at the head of Ivanhoe Lake where the Dubawnt plunged over a great rock forming twin waterfalls. Soon we were catching northern pike up to fifteen pounds on almost every cast.

Downstream, the Dubawnt formed good-sized lakes, but to negotiate the river sections between these lakes required a combination of portaging, wading, and dragging the canoe down shallow riffles with some welcome stretches of paddling and navigable rapids. Once, when the river split into two branches, we managed only nine miles after a full day's travel. Each lake, however, was a pleasant interlude that offered a variety of open, windswept campsites free from the swarms of mosquitoes that had emerged during the recent succession of warm, sunny days. Little sign of man was evident except for a couple of crumbling log cabins perched high above the river, showing that trappers had once been active in this country.

After eighty miles on the Dubawnt, we struck a more northerly course towards the tree line by way of an exquisite chain of lakes whose shores glistened with sandy beaches and interlacing eskers. Barren hilltops began to poke up through the thinning forest, and green meadows of tundra plants met the lakeshores in steep, slumping banks of layer upon layer of decomposing vegetation. We remember days of strong southerly winds whisking us over the lakes before great rolling waves; and endless sun; portaging above the forest along the top of an esker; the last small bands of geese hurrying north; and between lakes, shallow rocky creeks literally alive with grayling.

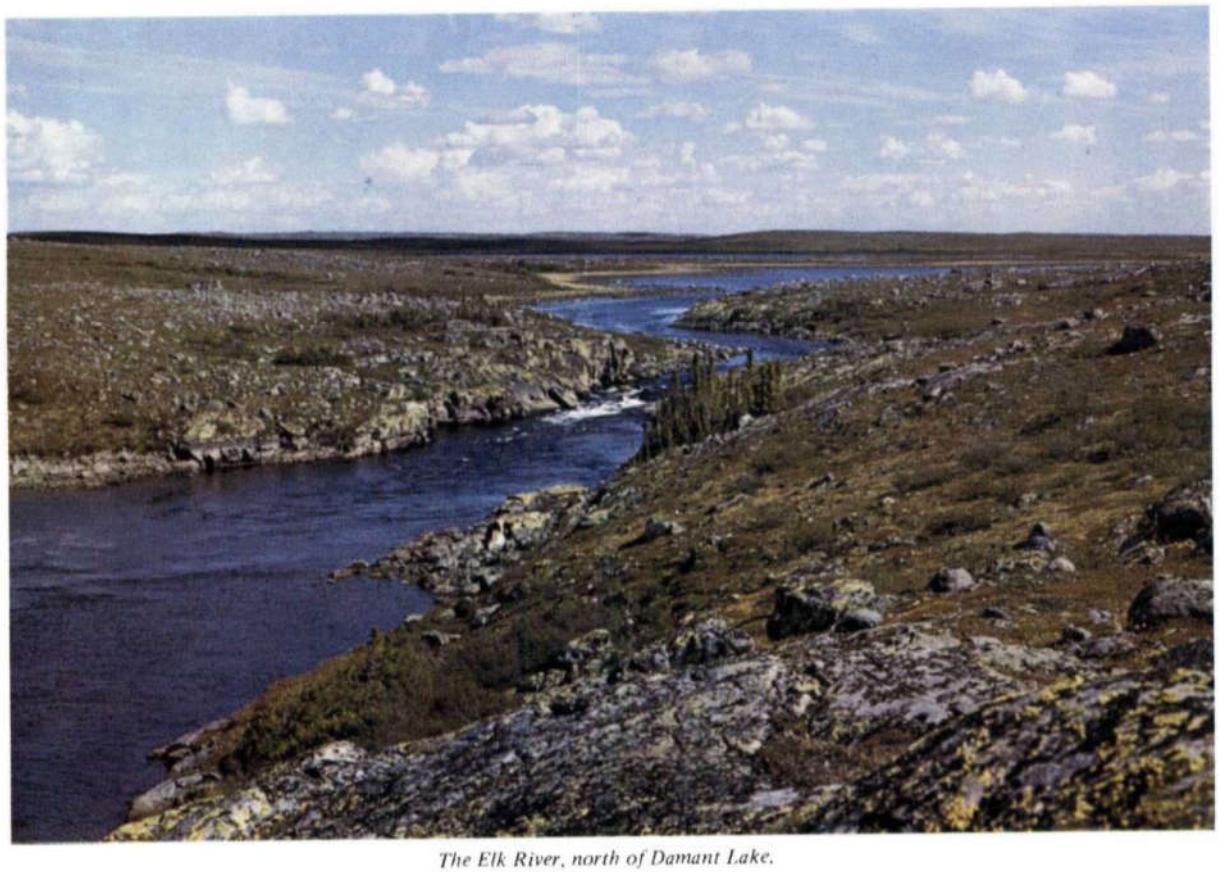
On 19 June, in the brief twilight that passes for night at that latitude, we paddled out onto Rennie Lake and pitched camp on the edge of the Barrens. In the sunlight later that morning we could see the abrupt line of forest just to the south, then the small clumps of stunted spruce that marched away to the north hugging close to the great runs of sand beaches along the lake. Beyond the shoreline a vast, treeless plain rolled away in the distance giving a tremendous sense of space.

Arctic ground squirrel.

The Elk River, summer retreat of thousands of Canada geese.

The source waters of the Elk River, Rennie and Damant Lakes had great expanses of cold water that disappeared into the horizon with no land in sight. As luck had it we crossed them both in a flat calm, but the heat was oppressive, and great clouds of black-flies followed us out from shore for miles on end. Part of the monotony of crossing these lakes was relieved by watching for lake trout. They seemed to be breaking the surface for insects everywhere. At one point we noticed what appeared to be smoke from a campfire swirling up from a small island about a half-mile ahead. Closer, we heard a high-pitched whine, then fifty yards away we saw that the 'smoke' was actually millions of flying gnats. Perhaps the highlight of our fishing experiences over the summer came at the top of a narrow, tree-studded valley that funnelled the cold, clear waters of Rennie Lake into Damant Lake a few miles below. Although the black-flies were merciless, we had the time of our lives battling the fat grayling and huge lake trout lying in the shallows.

From Damant Lake the Elk River wound through a system of small lakes flanked by hilly barrens, then finally plunged over a short series of steep rapids into the Thelon River. Although no rapids were marked on our maps of the Elk, we encountered them by the dozens. All except three were navigable, but many were



The Elk River, north of Damant Lake.

shallow which could prove troublesome to canoe travel by midsummer. One section near the river's confluence with the Thelon sported an exhilarating mile-long torrent that demanded all the ability we could muster to keep our canoe on a safe course away from the rocks.

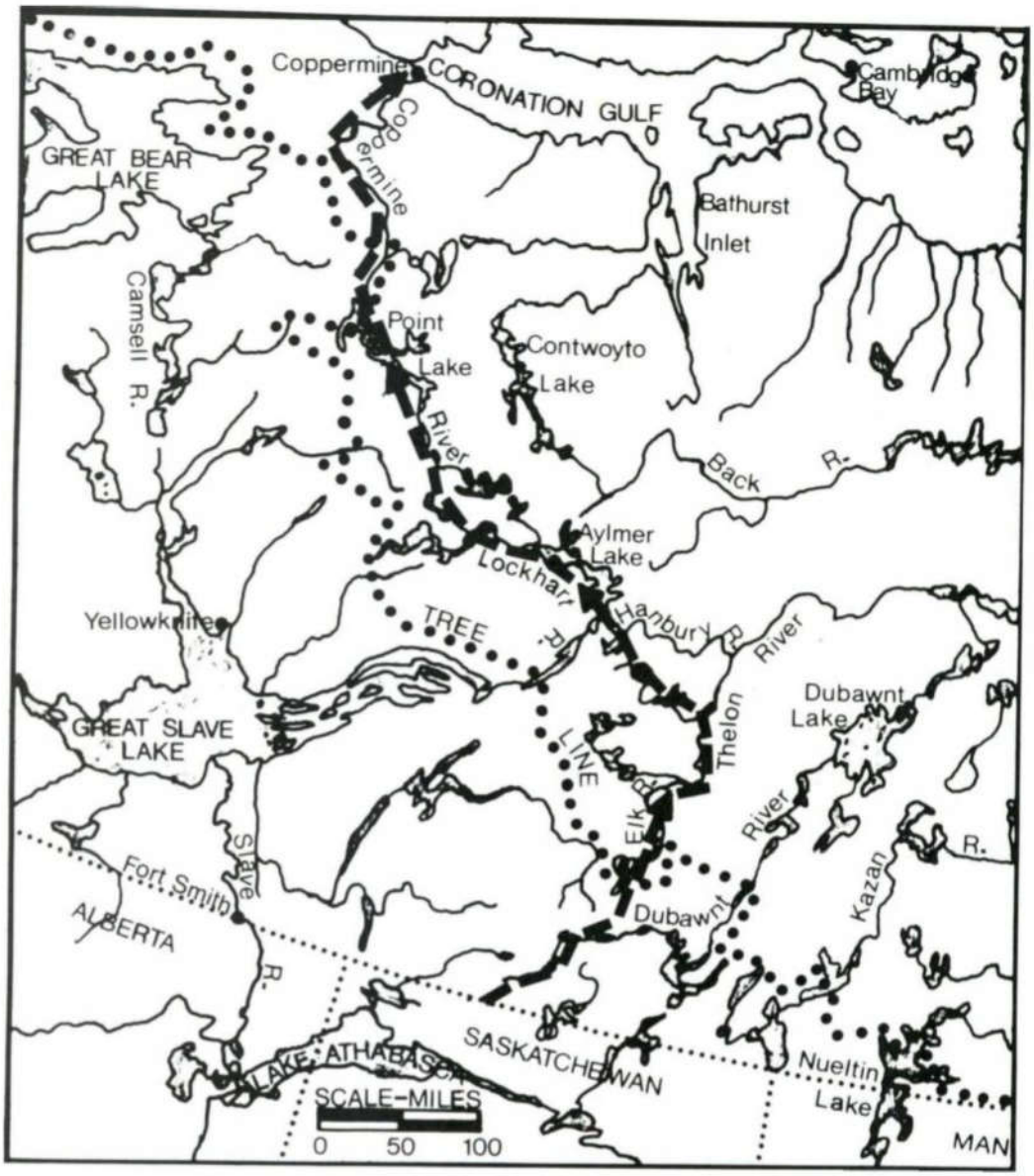
The Elk River valley possessed a charm that could rival that of almost any other part of the north. The eskers were long and sinuous, with sweeps of clean, white sand and blanketed here and there by a smooth greenery of crowberry. The spruce that grew in places along the heights of the eskers were tall and symmetrical; the adjacent sand dunes often cradled little round lakes reflecting the brilliant blue sky. Along the river, clumps of smaller spruce and an occasional lofty tamarack provided sanctuaries for a few typical forest dwellers such as robins and red squirrels.

As we descended the Elk, tundra forms of wildlife made their appearance. Scoter ducks gave way to old squaws; there were parasitic jaegers, willow ptarmigan, red-throated loons, arctic ground squirrels, a white arctic wolf, and tracks of the barren-ground grizzly bear. The trodden-down country along the Elk showed that caribou in incredible numbers had passed this way on their northern migration some five weeks previously.

The Elk was also the summer retreat of thousands of non-breeding Canada geese. Being flightless at that time of year, they would slink ashore as we approached, then, with their long necks stretched close to the ground, they would run off with an awkward gait that caused their tilted tails to wag to and fro in the most comical manner. One of their favourite tricks was to dash overland to cut off a bend in the river so that they could re-enter the water far ahead of us. Sometimes they just disappeared inland. Being curious, we once tracked a flock of one hundred for a mile and a half over sand dunes. We gave up when we finally saw a lone goose topping a distant hill, still going like a race-horse. On a few occasions we overtook geese in fast water. As we closed in they would scurry out of the way flapping their wings, or they would dive and sneak off completely submerged except for their heads and necks which they kept flattened against the surface.

When we entered the Thelon just forty-five miles from its source, we found a wide, fast-moving river flowing between high gravel banks. Although the river passed through rather flat, monotonous country, it was pure pleasure to coast along at speeds up to ten miles per hour without a single rapid to negotiate. Our second day on the Thelon was highlighted by the unusual sighting of a large bull moose, a full seventy-five miles from the forest.

In reaching the Thelon by way of the Elk River, we



An esker in the southern Barrens near the Elk River.

The large white male wolf watches as author Alex Hall holds one of the cubs taken from a den in the valley of the Mary Frances River.

had travelled a virtually unknown route leading into the heart of the Barrens. The Elk, which forms a key link between the Dubawnt and Thelon Rivers, can also be easily reached from Lake Athabasca via Black, Selwyn, and Wholdaia lakes, thereby avoiding the upper Dubawnt. To the west of the Elk are several other water routes leading to the Thelon from the Taltson River including one described by Blanchet (*The Beaver*, June 1950) as the road used by Indian muskox hunters before the turn of the century. The Dubawnt and Kazan Rivers, the better known southern approaches to the tundra and its interior, were explored by the Tyrrell brothers in 1893 and 1894.

On 29 June we left the Thelon and easily tracked and paddled our canoe three miles up the clear waters of the Mary Frances River. That evening we pitched our tent in a wide, sandy valley supporting lush sedge meadows in the bottom lands and surprisingly large stands of spruce on drier ground. Close by there were bald eagles, groups of Canada geese, and newly-hatched broods of green-winged teal and pintails.

Travelling down a river in a canoe can be likened to driving down a highway in a car; scene after scene rolls by, but one feels somewhat apart from the land. So as often as we could we hiked off from our campsites to satisfy the urge for direct contact with the land. Anxious to explore our beautiful valley on the Mary Frances, we set out on foot the next morning and soon came face to face with two white wolves. After a period of mutual examination one animal trotted off, while the other, a large male, retreated only a hundred yards or so, then began to howl and bark. Assuming we had stumbled into the vicinity of a wolf den, we soon located a likely-looking sandy hummock about a half mile away. Sure enough, there we found some shallow, interconnecting tunnels containing two dun-coloured pups several weeks old. Under the watchful eye of the big white male we removed two shy little bundles of fur from the den for a few photographs, then returned them. Apparently our intrusion was taken rather lightly by the wolves, for about an hour later we observed one of the adults stretched out asleep beside an entrance to the den.

Studies have shown that wolves cannot raise large litters of young in this part of the Barrens because caribou are temporarily out of reach to the north during the denning period. Lesser beasts can only offer these large predators a marginal living. When southward-drifting caribou returned to the Mary Frances country in August the pups would be old enough to take up the nomadic way of life with their parents.

Upriver from our camp the Mary Frances made a big bend to the south as it fell steeply over the lip of the Thelon valley. It was here that explorer J. W. Tyrrell was thwarted in his attempt to chart a water route west to the Lockhart River. Sending his men downstream to return to the Lockhart via the Hanbury River, Tyrrell walked overland to rejoin his party on Artillery Lake. With the advantage of modern maps we elected to by-pass this section of the Mary Frances by making a seven-mile portage north of the river. Since we still had

Camp on an esker, Tyrrell Lake.

to transport everything in three loads the distance actually travelled was a punishing thirty-five miles.

In two days we rejoined the Mary Frances in a country completely lacking in the sandy hills and stands of spruce that had characterized the Thelon just a few miles below us. From this point our course to the Hanbury River lay across a number of lakes of varied size. Buoyed up by the good weather, the complete absence of ice, and our progress to date, we were now confident that we could easily reach our destination of Coppermine by September 1st. Then on Mary Frances Lake we were pinned down in the lee of an esker for forty-eight hours by thunderstorms and gale-force winds. This was the only time during the summer that weather conditions prevented us from travelling.

Caribou were finally sighted as we neared the Hanbury River on July 9th. A tight formation of five hundred bulls streamed down a distant hillside, turned at a small lake, and headed our way. Minutes later the herd was racing alongside us under a weaving tangle of oversized antlers. Stragglers passed us throughout the remainder of the day, all of them being driven upwind by the insect horde. Although the flies were numerous, we did not find them voracious; but they were driving the caribou frantic. When the poor beasts tried to stop to graze, the flies would close in causing the animals to shake or buck, then go charging off again. Caribou were easily approachable, and we often attracted distant animals by waving a white handkerchief. While some showed an obvious curiosity in our presence, many simply ignored us, having no apparent fear or knowledge of man.

That evening stragglers periodically passed through our camp to cross an adjacent narrows on Smart Lake. By midnight both of us were in our sleeping bags writing up some notes when a wolf began howling some distance away. In response to our imitations of its cry, the animal shortly appeared at the narrows, then splashed through the shallow waters and walked into camp. A few yards away from our tent it stopped to examine its surroundings in the fading light, taking no particular notice of that peculiar white object with two human heads poking out through the flap. It then retraced its steps and sauntered along the far side of the narrows, stopping every few yards to utter a lonesome call. Earlier that day we had seen another wolf standing on top of a downed bull caribou floating in water about fifty yards from shore. On this day, July 9th, the Barrens came to life for us. The open terrestrial sea without caribou had been empty; now a new dimension had been added.

A wolf on the sand dunes of Mary Frances River.

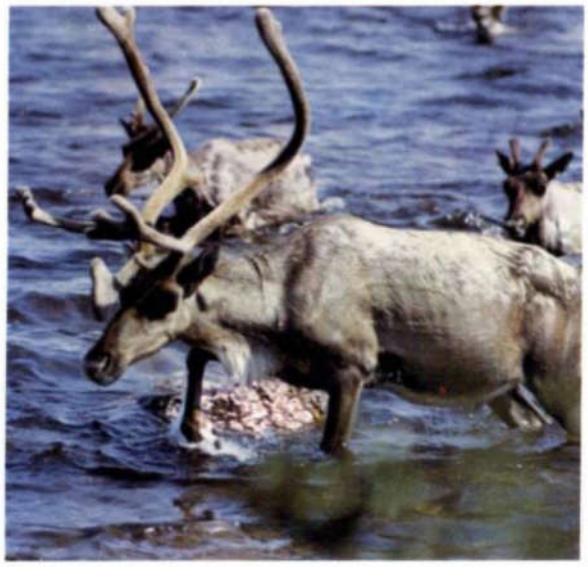
A tight formation of caribou bulls.

The next day we found the scattered ruins of several mineral exploration camps that had been active in the upper Hanbury area during the late 1960s. At one of these camps we gathered up a big bundle of unused claim stakes. They were a precious find in a land where the only firewood came from a few spindly bushes of dwarf birch.

On July 11th we entered the Lockhart River at the south end of Clinton-Colden Lake. This was the great crossroads of the Barren Grounds. It was difficult to escape the sense of history of that lonely place for the land must still look as it did when the early explorers first viewed it. Samuel Hearne had passed this way in 1771 on his incredible overland trek from Hudson Bay to the mouth of the Coppermine River. Sir George Back had come through here in 1834 bound for the Great Fish River; both Hanbury and Tyrrell had passed by at the turn of the century en route to the mysterious Thelon. Yellowknife and Chipewyan Indians, and fox trappers in the 1920s, had all regularly come this way.

Upriver, the Lockhart formed four great lakes with stretches of fast water between them. Our luck held as we pushed on, encountering gentle breezes on the lakes and strong tail winds on a few of the river sections. The Lockhart tumbled down considerable grades in places, but we usually found favourable ground along the edges for tracking our canoe upstream, keeping portaging to a minimum. West of Aylmer Lake the country became

Caribou near the Coppermine: one of the world's last great wildlife spectacles.



This six-week-old calf had already travelled some 200 miles with its mother.

more rugged. Although the hills were littered with boulders, the lowlands were lush with green meadows and extensive growths of dwarf birch. A few stunted spruce trees reappeared, and willows up to ten feet in height grew in some favourable locations along the river.

In the late afternoon of July 24th we were making our way over a string of small lakes leading into the Coppermine River when we began to see a few small bands of caribou travelling high along the distant ridges. By evening we realized these were the forerunners of one of the world's last great wildlife spectacles. Caribou literally flooded into the area. fifty here, a hundred there, herds of three hundred, five hundred, a thousand, as far as the eye could see there were caribou, all moving leisurely southwest towards the tree line. After supper we went out and walked among the herds. They were in no hurry for the hot weather had done its work well. Blackflies and mosquitoes had virtually disappeared during the second week of July. Now the caribou had time to fatten up on grasses and sedges and browse among the thickets of dwarf birch.

They were an odd-looking crew. The bulls, although scarce, looked noble enough, but the cows were a bare-bones lot, still shedding their coats of ragged winter hair. Calves were there by the hundreds, cream-coloured to chocolate brown, chunky, and full of play. We watched them splash into the water behind their mothers and gamely swim the lake. It was hard to believe that most of them were only six weeks old, but then they had done a lot of travelling between here and the calving grounds near Bathurst Inlet some two hundred miles away. Moving en masse, the cows seemed to have trouble keeping track of their calves. At any rate, there was a great deal of grunting and belching on the part of the cows and a mounting swell of these guttural sounds announced the arrival of each new wave of animals that swept into sight.

When we awoke the next morning, caribou were still pouring in from the north. Travelling only seven or eight miles that day, we passed an estimated four thousand, all moving slowly in the same direction. Several times we eased the canoe within twenty-five yards of herds that were feeding and resting on shore. That afternoon we came upon a large concentration of animals filing across a narrow lake in two long columns. Standing in chest-high dwarf birch growing along the edge of the lake, we watched hundreds swim ashore, then stream by us at arm's reach.

For over a hundred miles down the Coppermine, caribou were never long out of sight. Groups of twenty-five to one hundred seemed to occupy every lush little valley tucked away among the eighty miles of rugged

Whistling swan on the Coppermine River.

Authors Hall (left) and Voigt prepare to run the Sandstone Rapids.

highlands along Point Lake. On more than one night we were awakened by large herds passing within a few feet of our tent. Confronted with these incredible numbers of animals, it is not difficult to understand why some northerners believe that millions of caribou still roam the Barren Lands. However, we had also passed through hundreds of miles of tundra to the south that were almost completely drained of life. For a full 175 miles along the Lockhart River we had seen only four caribou.

On August 3rd we re-entered the forest below Point Lake after nearly seven hundred miles of travel on the Barrens. Here we met two groups of fly-in fishermen, the only people encountered on our route. By then we were smoking the year-old leaves of the bearberry plant and had developed a strong craving for sweets and fresh fruit. We were as gleeful as small children when our hosts treated us to lavish meals, then presented us with a generous supply of chocolate bars and enough tobacco to see us through the rest of the trip.

With fast river and only three short portages ahead, the remaining 275 miles of our route required little more than a week's travel. After a brief passage through the forest, the Coppermine re-emerged onto the tundra but scattered white spruce trees floored its valley for an additional 150 miles. As we continued downstream, the valley deepened, and spruce was restricted to the lower flanks of rugged hills that towered one thousand to fifteen hundred feet above the river. Now that we were within striking distance of our destination with plenty of time to spare, we relaxed and spent many long days climbing into hidden valleys along cold, gushing streams and roaming the hills high above tree line. Barren-ground caribou were now scarce, but once we saw a bull woodland caribou, and also some moose that had moved into the bottom lands in recent years. Golden eagles swept the open gravel ridges hunting for ground squirrels, and down on the river there were whistling swans, some late broods of widgeons, and great flocks of pintails and mallards. Although the fishing was usually disappointing, one evening we caught some big pink-bellied arctic char close to three feet in length.

In mid-August the weather turned cold and wet with intermittent snow showers and heavy frosts at night. Decked out in nylon rain suits and inflatable life vests, we set out from Muskox Rapids on August 19th, the river now bitterly cold and clouded by the murky, rain-swollen waters of the Kendall River. Below us the Coppermine was a continuous succession of rapids as it fell five hundred feet in a fifty-mile run to the sea. Twisting through deepening canyons of red sandstone and past white clay cliffs, the river channel was frequently whitened by rows of huge standing waves that kept smashing over the gunwales of our canoe. The wildest section was a six-mile stretch beginning with Sandstone Rapids where the river dropped over twenty-five feet per mile. By staying on the inside turns we avoided most of the turbulence, but on two occasions we had to head gingerly for shore with several inches of water in the bottom of the canoe.

The next morning we arrived at Bloody Falls, so named by Samuel Hearne to mark the massacre of a small Eskimo party by his Indian guides in 1771. Schools of arctic char, fresh from the sea, were running up the river, so we stayed for several hours casting our lures at the leaping, silver bodies. The banks of the remaining eleven miles of the Coppermine were dotted with Eskimo tents, and alongside each were the red fillets of char drying on wooden racks. The river was now slow and easily navigable for the outboard canoes full of waving and shouting Eskimos that zipped by us headed upriver towards Bloody Falls. A cold drizzle was falling that afternoon of August 20th when we paddled out onto the Arctic Ocean and pulled into the community of Coppermine, ending what was probably the greatest experience of our lives.

Two days later, aboard a DC-3, we flew up the Coppermine valley bound for Yellowknife. The land that we had journeyed across in weeks of travel, we now whisked over in a few minutes. Down there we had been insignificant, powerless in a vast ocean of hills that rolled away to the horizon. Although the population of the Barrens — human and animal — has dwindled in recent decades, the land itself lies there still intact, still unscarred by modern technology, silent and waiting. ◆

On a return visit last summer the author picked wild flowers from what was once the front yard of the homestead.

RESTLESS PIONEERS

BY EVELYN SLATER McLEOD

For twelve years Mrs McLeod of Seattle, Washington, lived in a comfortable sod home on an Alberta homestead. Photographs, except where noted, are from the author's collection.

WHEN I FIRST SET FOOT on the grasslands of Alberta I was nearly six years old. My family was one of a group of 19 families and a number of single men who had filed claims for homestead land the previous fall and who, in the spring of 1909, had come to take possession. Most of us were from Benson county in North Dakota.

I was the daughter of Ray Slater and had joined the family of my great-uncle Wesley Williams and his wife Ellen (who were childless) when my mother died the previous year. There were five of us children and we were fortunate, for each of us had been taken into the home of a relative.

My uncle Wesley, 60 years of age at that time, was a kindly man with bright blue eyes and ample moustache. His wife Ellen, 12 years younger, was of English ancestry and had taught school prior to their marriage. She was good-looking in a stern way. Her everyday gingham and Sunday challis were in the style of the period: skirts that fell to the ankle, covering the upper part of high-topped shoes. Aunt Ellen took good care of me. My hair was braided so tight I had perpetually raised eyebrows and I was not permitted to make mud pies because I would soil my pinafore. She was a stickler for good manners, and was determined that I should grow up to be a lady, an eventuality to which she often referred.

It was the 10th of April when our train reached rails' end at Stettler, Alberta. Our household goods and livestock arrived at the same time and we were to continue to our homesteads, 110 miles southeast of Stettler, by wagon train.

The people in our venture had funds, although limited. The one hotel in Stettler was not equipped to handle such a crowd even if we had wanted to use their facilities, so tents were set up at the edge of the small town to provide living accommodation for the week spent there. The men set about readying the wagons for the trip by building racks on some and covering them with canvas. These racks gave considerably more space for living quarters on the journey than the somewhat narrower wagon box. A number of other wagons without cover were driven mostly by men without families. The bachelors included a genial Negro, John Bond, in his late teens, who had attended school in North Dakota with some of the youths in our party.

Not all the time in Stettler was spent preparing for the trek; delays were occasioned by foul weather and the bad travel conditions that everyone knew would be encountered at that time of year. There were no roads, not even wagon trails. Our course was set by compass across the prairies.

Shortly after leaving Stettler we reached the Mayville Flats, at their worst during the spring thaw. Even with four horses to a wagon, rigs bogged down in the mire. My uncle's team balked in the mud and he was in trouble until two cowboys rode up to the caravan. Without much ado, they looped their lariats from their saddle-horns to the wagon tongue and snaked out the wagon, balky team and all.

Well before dusk camp was made for the night beside one of the numerous spring ponds formed from the melted snow. We children enjoyed the gypsy life while our elders went about their chores, milking the five cows that travelled tethered behind wagons during the day, and feeding the few chickens. They filled water buckets for household use from one side of the pond and watered the livestock from the other; then the horses were hobbled to prevent their straying during the night.

Six days and some 25 miles beyond the Flats, we were halted by a two-day snowstorm; the lumber was unloaded and a temporary shelter was built to protect the animals. The following week the prairie fires started. Grass and ground dries fast on the plains; there were always fires showing on the horizon and once we saw one sweeping towards us across the prairie grass under a brisk wind. We halted, unloaded the hand-ploughs from the wagons, hitched up the horses and cut furrows for a firebreak. But time had run out. The protective strip of turned sod was not wide enough; in places the fire jumped across and men and women set to work to beat it out with wet gunny-sacks. Afterwards there was concern that there would be no grass for the livestock when we reached the homesteads.

One day the wagon train was making its way around the side of a steep slope. My aunt did not like the tilt our wagon was taking and got out to walk, but I chose to remain inside. The wagon finally went over; my uncle who was driving managed to jump clear of the outfit with only a slight injury. I was thrown to one side and in a flash found myself buried beneath stove lids, pipes, soot, ashes and household equipment. My elders heard no outcry; my mouth and throat were so full of soot and ashes that I could make no sound. Then I realized I was being pulled out of the mess. When my feet were on the ground and I got some of the grime from my mouth, I started to scream and kept it up for some time with intermittent choking and gagging. Then I saw that the coals from the stove had set fire to the canvas wagon cover and this added fuel to my fright. Eventually I was calmed by my Aunt Ellen and the other women and cleaned up from top to toe – a major job. Putting the wrecked wagon back in order was even more difficult, but it was accomplished and we were all back on the road the next morning.

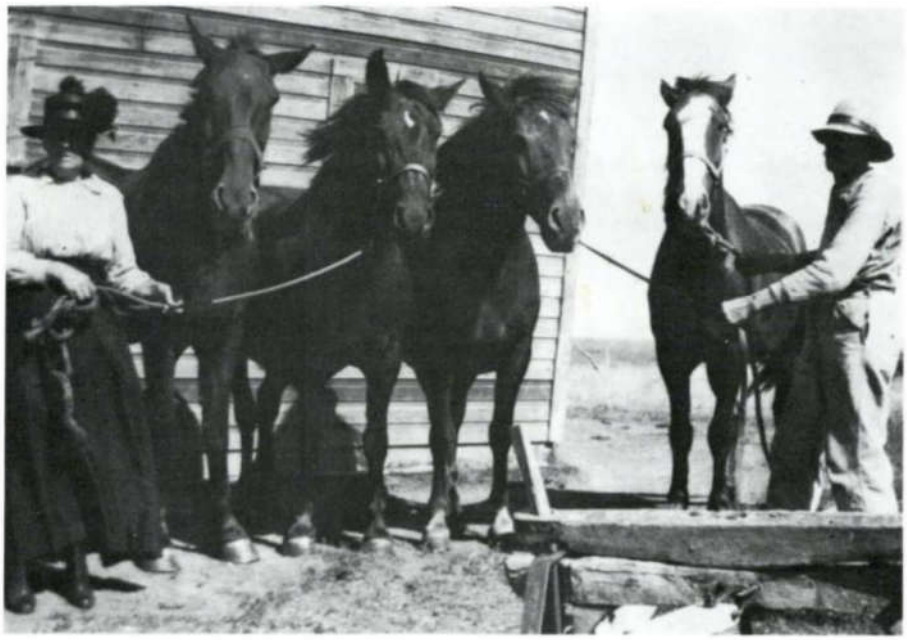
Early in the day at the end of the second week, we drove onto the promised land. When the iron stakes were identified, indicating the half-section on which each had filed, the wagons were driven to the individual properties. The first task was to unload the ploughs and make the all-important firebreak around a quarter-section to assure sufficient grass for the livestock. Other firebreaks were ploughed nearer the wagons, bearing in mind the prevailing winds. Three days later fires burned over the rest of the prairie. I recall that antelope and deer came to feed in the evenings around the perimeter of the unburned area.

Wildlife was everywhere. Prairie chickens were abundant and in season ducks flew in for brief rests on the sloughs. Badgers and coyotes, jack-rabbits and snowshoe rabbits were numerous and the prairie teemed with gophers. There were no buffalo; the huge herds had been gone for two decades, but their deep, hard-beaten paths still showed plainly. Their skulls were much in evidence and the land was covered with 'buffalo chips', thoroughly desiccated by the hot summer sun. Fuel was

The author at 15 years of age.

TOM WILLOCK

The open plains of Alberta as they may have looked to the homesteaders coming in by wagon train.



Aunt Ellen and Uncle Wesley Williams with their horses.

scarce and for several years these 'chips' were gathered in old pails and used to augment our heating supplies.

During the summer we continued to live in our prairie schooners while the menfolk set about building houses and barns from the good earth. They ploughed furrows 16 inches wide and 4 inches deep near the slough where the sod was tough and could be handled like large blocks. The turned sod was marked off in lengths of 32 inches and chopped apart with an axe; these pieces were laid like brick and produced a wall 32 inches thick. A cellar, approximately seven feet deep and ten feet square was first dug to provide storage under the house. Then the sods were laid for the walls and partitions. When the house was completed a trap-door was cut in the floor and a ladder was lowered to provide access to the cellar.

During the first year or so, virtually all the buildings had sod roofs (the lumber that had been brought along was used for flooring). Small poplars were cut from the coulees nearby and placed close together to serve as rafters. Two layers of tarpaper were then placed over them and slabs of sod added to keep out the weather. These roofs never were satisfactory and in three years at the most, every house had a roof of lumber.

After the sod structure was up and the windows in, holes inside and out were thoroughly chinked with mud. A coat of mud was then trowelled over the inside walls and the interior was whitewashed. As time went on some housewives covered their walls with inexpensive cheese-cloth and wallpaper.

Every family house had a 'parlour' with a large rug, or all-over carpeting. Ours was rag carpet, woven in three-foot strips. This was swept every day but in time it required a more thorough cleaning. The tacks were pulled, it was taken out to the clothes-line and beaten to remove some of the dust, and then the strips were ripped apart and washed. It took several days to complete the task, as all these strips had to be sewn together again by hand before the carpet was relaid. Our parlour had an ornate heater with isinglass in its door, a leather horsehair-stuffed couch with raised head, and a fine pump organ. The 'frosting on the cake' was a resplendent coal-oil lamp with pink roses on its china base and globe. Potted plants always bloomed on the deep window-seats and were carried to the cellar at night during the winter months.

The sod dwellings proved to be very comfortable; but when the thermometer registered 40 to 60 degrees below zero and the fire burned out in the kitchen range at night, the water pail would contain solid ice by morning. I recall too that we had several blizzards that howled for three days. With the coming of winter Uncle Wesley always put up a guide rope from the house to the barn to assure his safety when visibility was zero. On such occasions Aunt Ellen kept a kerosene lamp burning all night on the wide window-seat. I remember that once I was awakened during the night by an unusual commotion and found that my aunt and uncle were thawing a man's feet and hands in a tub of snow. He was intoxicated and when he became somewhat warmed he vomited on the floor. This made my aunt very unhappy – perhaps more so because she, my uncle and all their people were teetotallers. The stranger had found our house, on his hands and knees, after his team had

The sod house built by the Slater family, 1911.

thrown him from the sled and run away. The lamp in the window had saved his life.

Water for drinking could be had from the nearby coulees – one to the south of the homesteads and the other to the east. This good spring water was hauled to the dwellings in barrels on home-made sleds in summer and conventional sleds in winter. Generally, the livestock were driven to the springs to drink, rather than the water hauled for the animals.

During the ensuing year newcomers were moving in and while our settlement was being established the railroad was extending its line to the small town of Hardisty, 60 miles northwest of us. This was now the nearest point where building materials and farm supplies could be obtained. Lumber was needed for roofs, and for cribbing so wells could be dug; many trips were made to Hardisty and back. It was a four-day journey, necessitating over-night stops at 'road-houses'. A road-house was a night's lodging for profit in some settler's home – where one faced the hazard of bedbugs and lice. A de-lousing reception always awaited the traveller upon his return home.

As soon as lumber was available, board roofs were added to the houses. Roofs were made in sections and placed on top of the old ones. To hold them secure in a high wind, heavy stones attached to wires were laid near the eaves. With wooden roofs, rain barrels could be used to augment the water supply – and these rain barrels continued to supply soft water for laundry purposes even after wells were dug. During the winter months housewives melted snow in wash-tubs and boilers on their kitchen ranges.

As settlement progressed, wells were dug. Why the willow branch in the hands of my Uncle Wesley turned towards the earth at a certain point I never knew, but it did. I watched it many times. He was the expert and 'witched' most of the neighbourhood wells.

The settlers helped each other in true community spirit when the well-digging began. The wells were all dug with pick and shovel and the dirt was brought to the surface by windlass. As the shaft deepened, board cribbing was lowered to prevent cave-ins. The settlers went down 90 feet on one farm before striking water. During the digging of our 60-foot well, we all marvelled when small sea shells were found many feet down. In all the wells the water proved to be alkaline, but not harmful or objectionable to the taste.

Much toil went into making living tolerable in the first years, and nothing brought our trials more into perspective than hearing of a tragedy in a settlement somewhere to the northwest of us. The pioneer family lived in a dugout furnished only with apple crates. Food had run out and in a cold summer rain their little girl went to gather whatever the prairie had to offer. She drifted with the wind and was not found for 48 hours. There were a few wild mushrooms in her basket; she had died of exposure and starvation.

Among the many who were now joining the original pioneers was an English couple, Mr and Mrs H. A. Sanderson. In the spring of 1910 they located about eight miles north of the first settlers and two miles south of the C.P.R. right-of-way where the town of Consort later grew up when the rails came in October 1912. The Sandersons established a small general store on their

Wesley Williams who 'witched' most of the neighbourhood wells, stands beside the granary.

homestead and business was carried on in part of their house. The proximity of this store, however meagrely stocked, was a welcome addition to our lives. Mr Sanderson's appointment as postmaster by the Canadian government on 15 March 1910 provided us with the post office known as Sanderville and we again felt in touch with the world we had left. When the town of Consort was founded Mr Sanderson moved his store and post office to that site and the family carried on business there for many years.

By the summer of 1910 there were quite a number of school-age children in the vicinity and that year the community built the Willow Brook school across the road east of the Ray Slater homestead. Ed Akre, who had arrived that spring by ox-team, supervised the work and everyone gave a hand. The school housed grades one through eight and for many years it also served as a civic centre and a place of worship. Our first teacher was Daniel Day, father of Doctor Arthur Day who later finished his medical education and returned to spend his lifetime in Consort, ministering to the needs of its people and the settlers near by. Doctor Day will be remembered as a little pudgy man, eyeglasses mended with adhesive tape and carrying a dilapidated medical satchel. During the 'Dirty Thirties' those who benefited from his skills gave him a dollar if they had it left after feeding their families. He was well loved in the community; his devotion was total.

I remember that our school was close to a coulee that gave good spring water. We children carried the water from the spring in a galvanized pail; it was placed on a box at the back of the room and a long-handled tin dipper rested in it for use by all the children. Then part of the spring was diverted for livestock watering and the whole area below the diversion became quagmire. On one occasion a horse bogged down in this morass and his struggles only sent him deeper. The owner, Eber Waite, threw a small lasso around the animal's neck, but under pressure the rope broke. He was frantically trying to find some way to save his horse when a neighbour came by who, like all prudent farmers, carried a log chain in his wagon. This they managed to get around the neck of the floundering beast and the other horses pulled him out. It was the school noon hour and we were all on hand for the excitement.

Another family, the Houstons, moved into our area 6 July 1912. James Houston was not a well man at that time. He and his family started their 60-mile wagon course from Castor, then the nearest rail terminal. Mr Houston drove a four-ox team and his wife Clara (with their three-year-old daughter Jean to care for) handled two half-wild cayuse ponies on the other wagon. Their son Stewart, barely a teenager, helped with the driving.

There have been few cattle drives without cowboys and their mounts but the Houston cattle were driven the 60 miles by the two older daughters in the family – Ethel, age 11, and Pearl, 9. At first the drive appeared to be more than the girls could cope with, but when a young calf was put in one of the wagons its mother followed and the other cattle strayed less.

At the end of their journey the Houstons lived in their tent while a frame shack was thrown together from the small lumber supply on one of the wagons. Mr Houston's health continued to fail and he passed away the winter of 1914. After his death his indomitable widow, clad in her calico blouse and long full black skirt, was a familiar figure riding the plough in her fields and driving four horses.

There was great tranquillity in that remote settlement. When we were expecting the return of a loved one, occasionally we put an ear to the ground to listen for the sound of horses' hoofs on the hard earth and the distant rumble of the wagon several miles away. Then there were the warm summer evenings when the mosquitoes were unmerciful to man and beast. The welcome sight and smell of a smudge built in the barnyard would bring the cattle running from their pasture to the protection of the smoke that wiped away the grey blanket of tormenting insects.

There were not many dull moments for the teenagers, for they always found some way to improve their lot. Lawrence Slater and Lincoln Akre, about 13 years of age, set up a telegraph line along the barbed-wire fence between their homes and sent messages to each other by dots and dashes learned from a Morse code book.

Then there were always gophers to catch; a lucrative pastime for all the boys. The Canadian government offered a bounty of one cent for each gopher tail turned in, so Clarence Slater and his younger brother Lawrence were diligent hunters. Usually they snared the gophers with a slip knot at the end of a length of binder-twine. After a gopher ran into its burrow, the loop was placed around the entrance to the hole and the boys flattened themselves about 12 feet back. In only a few minutes they had their prize.

One day Clarence caught an albino gopher. He skinned it and proudly took it to his father who was drawing water. The albino skin called for some examination on the part of Dad, who accidently dropped it into their 90-foot well. It could not be recovered, but they never dared to tell that fact to Mother.

Occasionally youngsters caught young gophers and kept them for pets. Young crows were common pets for many children – I had one myself. An immature coyote was run down on horseback and kept for a while by the Slater boys, but they finally conceded it could not be tamed.

The chief grain crop in Alberta in those early days was wheat, just as it is today; oats was secondary and at that time flax was planted on a trial basis. The first flax crop in that district belonged to Sheldon Slater and it was harvested by the most primitive method. Flax has an extraordinary tendency to tangle and felt, so it was decided to cut it with a hay mower, gather it from the swath with a hayfork and load it onto a hayrack – without trampling, of course. The load was then brought into the area of the farm buildings, where it was threshed on the ground by running a disc over it. Father and son winnowed the chaff from the flax, a pail at a time, by holding the pails above their heads and letting the ever-present wind blow through the seed as it was poured back onto the ground.

The Willow Brook Schoolhouse built in 1910.

The money derived from that year's crop was but a pittance for a family of seven and the Slater family found themselves one of many wanting in material riches that fall. Clarence, the lad who had helped with the threshing of the flax, and his younger brother Lawrence had no shoes when the weather turned cold, but their resourceful mother made them moccasins from heavy binder canvas. Their mother, my Aunt Bertha, had four children of her own and my infant brother, Bertram. She was one of the several women with large families who must have had an inner

The threshers at Consort, Alberta, in 1915.

When fresh straw was taken for the household ticks, the cattle gleaned from the strawstack.

strength to support them when they agreed to leave their established homes and renew the rigours of pioneering.

By 1912 a local steam-engine threshing outfit entered the picture. It was completely manned by men in the district and at harvest time the housewives added the threshers to their own broods and sat them down at tables spread with the best food they could afford. When the threshing rig moved to the next farm it always left a fresh clean strawstack. Before the farm animals were permitted to glean from the stack, the household straw ticks were renewed. The ticks were bed-size bags fashioned from ticking and these, when filled with straw, made very resilient and warm mattresses. Eliminating conventional mattresses from house furnishings on the wagons from Stettler had cut the loads greatly.

Wild berries were plentiful. Strawberries were to be had in season by the dishpan-full, provided one did not mind crawling around the hillsides in the hot sun. We children were handy at this job. When the later berries were ripe in the coulees the womenfolk found time to get their winter's supply. One resolute housewife, Angie Molsberry, hitched her horse to the buggy at five o'clock in the morning all through berry season, and with a smudge to ward off the mosquitoes drove eight miles to the coulees where the picking was best. About four in the afternoon it was time for her to begin the long drive home; but the pails brimming with berries made the journey worth while. Wild raspberries, saskatoons, gooseberries, and chokecherries were to be had for the picking in those early days.

Occasional crises ruffled the rural tranquility. George Stauffer, a somewhat dilatory neighbour had a matched pair of Clydesdales. One forenoon George galloped up to the nearest farmhouse on one of them and yelled that its mate had fallen into a well. The horse had been missing a couple of days before he had become alarmed and he had just found it in a 20-foot well on an abandoned homestead. The beast had gone down rump first, clear to the bottom. By noon neighbours had gathered to help and had rigged up a windlass. George went down and attached ropes and they raised the horse to the surface; but at that point the animal struggled and fell back to the bottom again. A second try got him out, but he was in bad shape and did not live.

Homer Kelts who built his sod house half on his homestead and half on a 'South African Script.'

A homestead comprising 160 acres was not a large parcel of land for a prairie farm. Pasture had to be provided for livestock which cut into the area for cultivation, so many pioneers took pre-emptions adjoining their homesteads. These additional 160-acre tracts were made available by the government to anyone who would break 50 acres of the soil and pay three dollars per acre. If these requirements were met, title could be had in five years.

Homer Kelts applied for a pre-emption and obtained a South African Script as well. Both of these tracts required residence, so to meet the requirements he built his sod house half on his homestead and half on the script. A South African Script was a grant of one-half section of land to Canadians who had served in the Boer War. They could live on it, or sell it for whatever they could get. I believe that Homer Kelts purchased his script from the original owner for five hundred dollars.

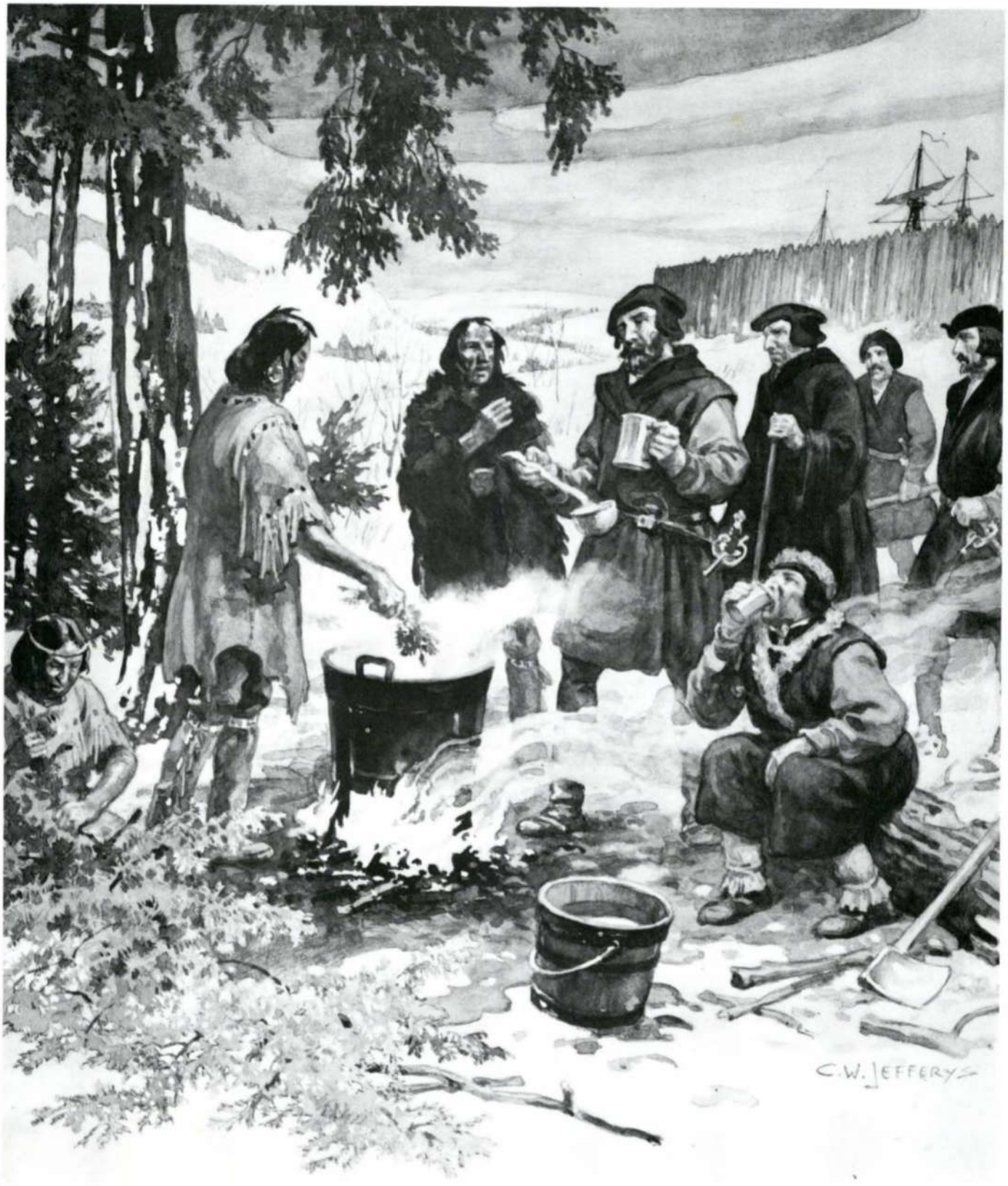
Early Alberta pioneering was a series of hardships and disappointments. Storms and drought shattered hopes of bumper crops year after year, yet the farmers did not give up their dream. By the year 1911 the homesteaders had considerable acreage in wheat and oats and the stand was excellent; but within a fortnight of harvesting the first of many tragedies struck. Hundreds of acres of prime grain were completely destroyed when a violent hailstorm lashed the countryside. The crops were beaten into the ground until only stubble showed. All windows facing the storm were completely knocked out of the buildings and then the rain came, driven by the same fierce wind. Families tried to protect the interiors of their homes and belongings by holding quilts and rugs up to the window openings to keep out as much rain as possible. I was only a child, but I did my best to help.

The first bumper crop came in 1915 (100 bushels per acre). Sheldon Slater felt the good year might not be repeated for a long time, so for that reason, and with the higher education of his children in mind, he returned to the ministry in North Dakota.

Only two families of the original group found the adversities of pioneer life too much for them and returned to North Dakota. The others stayed on adding their toil and leadership to the community for many years.

Angie Molsberry, after having reared her family in the Consort district is still active in and about her home in Bowden, at the age of 90. Harvey Kelts served twice as a rural municipal councillor (municipality of Stewart) and again in the town of Consort in charge of public works. The trees that now adorn the otherwise barren streets of this prairie town are the result of one of his projects. Marion Kelts served his constituents well in the provincial legislature from 1959 through 1963. His wife Ethel, who accompanied him to social engagements, was the older girl who had participated in the 60-mile cattle drive.

In the summer of 1961 I made a trip back to the Consort district where I grew up. It brought to mind nostalgic memories of fifty years ago. To some who have never broken prairie sod, these memories will give a brief insight into the past; to others, they will be as their yesteryears. ◆



'The First Prescription' by C. W. Jeffreys depicts Jacques Cartier taking a decoction from the juniper, the Indians' cure for scurvy. In 1942 this drawing was presented to Dr Kenneth McKenzie, Jeffreys' doctor, who had suggested the subject: it remains with his widow, by whose permission it is published here. Photo by T. E. Moore.

The Fur Traders: Their Diet and Drugs

By E. E. Rich

VAST AND DETAILED as the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company are, it must be admitted that they are disappointing as a source of information of the medical care which, from the start, is evident in the Company's treatment of its health problems. The surgeons are there, the medicaments are bought and shipped out. But the documents were maintained by fur traders for fur traders; their purpose was to balance the books, not to document a book. Technical details are therefore rare; but a general picture can be sketched with some confidence, a general picture in which diet and normal health, acceptance of hardship and a faintly cynical attitude to medicaments are as important as the details of the medicaments.

In contrast with the Canadian traders from Montreal and elsewhere in Canada, the Hudson's Bay men had little initial intention to voyage in the interior in search of furs. Indeed, their approach to the fur trade of the Northwest was based on the theory, sold to them by Radisson and Groseilliers, that it was possible to make contact at the seacoast with the Crees of the North by sailing ocean-going, bulk-carrying, ships down to the Bottom of Hudson's Bay instead of carrying negligible quantities of goods in small canoes over thousands of miles of difficult waterway and through dangerous Indian country, from Montreal and the Lower St Lawrence.

The Canadian traders, with restricted carrying capacity in their canoes, with easy access to French brandy, and passing through areas in which fresh meat and fish, wild rice and fruit, could be obtained, were conditioned to a regime in which bulky European provisions could not be thought of, in which dangers from Indian wars, tortures and massacres, and the perils of the route, were far greater than those of any disease. They were by character vigorous, self-reliant and improvident and, unless brandy be counted as such, there is no evidence that medicaments played any significant part in their preparations.

Living Indian-fashion, as the Canadians did, they got fresh food. Thereby, probably unwittingly, they escaped the menace of scurvy. Not that scurvy was unknown in French Canada, or to the Indians of North America. In his second voyage, of 1535-36, Jacques Cartier had first met the disease when he was forced to winter at about the site of Montreal. He knew no name for the disease, but he gave a graphic description of the sufferings involved. By February 1536 only ten men out of a hundred and ten were fit for duty, almost none escaped entirely, twenty-five died, and no remedy could be found although post-mortem dissections were carried out. Then Cartier noticed that affected Indians were quickly cured by a decoction from a tree which he called the *annedda*. The French quickly stripped a vast tree, and were all cured within a week! The tree has now been generally accepted as the juniper, the pinette blanche; the decoction of turpentine got from it came to be known, and to be generally used, as spruce beer. The Canadian *coureurs* and the English traders, learning from them, had an effective remedy against this most dread disease throughout the history of the fur trade.

This was the more remarkable since scurvy has remained a dangerous killer and debilitator into modern times, even since the discovery of vitamins and the use of anti-scorbutic pills. Up to the middle of the nineteenth century it was, as it had been since the first ocean-going voyages of the fifteenth century, the commonplace of life at sea. In Anson's voyage round the world of 1741-42, out of 961 men who embarked 626 died in the year, mostly from scurvy. The disease is directly attributable to dietary deficiencies and can be ascribed without question to the lack of vegetables and to the 'salt horse' and the weevily biscuit which composed the rations of life at sea. But although the remedies were known empirically they were not applied systematically – except in the fur trade! Anson, for example, took his men ashore on the Pacific coast so that their foul and insanitary mess-decks could be fumigated and sterilized. Only slowly did realization dawn that cure and recuperation came with fresh food, fruit, and turtle meat. In seven months only two men died, 'a most incontestible proof that the turtle was innocent, if not something more'. This experience on the American coast led to the use of 'sour oranges', limes and acid fruits, as soon as the voyage across the Pacific, with further outbreaks of scurvy, was over. Even so, Captain Cook was something of an innovator in providing acid fruits for his crews, and as late as 1795 Admiral St Vincent, commanding the Mediterranean fleet, could not be more positive than to confirm 'an opinion I have long entertained, that, next to fresh animal food, onions and lemons are the best anti-scorbutics'. Lime juice only became a daily issue in the Navy in 1793, and the battle against scurvy was then by no means over.

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Not only were the French of Canada two centuries ahead of the sailors in their fight against scurvy; the English of Hudson's Bay were equally competent. Egged on by Radisson and Groseilliers, the underwriters of the English venture had fitted out the pioneer *Nonsuch* voyage in 1668. This was to prove a definitive voyage in that it launched the English into the fur trade of the Northwest by showing that access by ship was indeed possible, that lucrative cargoes could be traded, and that ordinary Englishmen could live through the winter in the Sub-arctic. The *Nonsuch* (a ketch of forty-three tons) was 'environed with ice' and was dragged ashore by her crew, who built a house in which to live, buried their strong beer and brewed fresh small beer, and lived through the winter on deer, partridges and other wild-fowl, on rabbits, sturgeon, salmon-trout and 'brave pikes'. They lost not a single man, and their only trouble was that on their return voyage (when they would again be feeding on ship's provisions) some of them suffered 'some trouble of the Scurvy in their mouths'.

The success of the *Nonsuch* voyage undoubtedly played an important part in the movements which led to the granting of its full and definitive charter to the Hudson's Bay Company — a charter revealing considerable ignorance of the climate and geography of the region and which granted proprietorship of an ill-defined area of over a million square miles of territory, with power to rule, with a monopoly of trade, and with an inconclusive allusion to exploration in search of a North West Passage. But, whatever the charter may have intended, for a century the Company made no serious attempt to establish itself inland, out of touch with tidal waters. In consequence the role of its employees was to man the posts by the coast. Their duties were almost 'garrison duties', their life and outlook narrow, their amenities few and unvaried. They could easily have been liable to scurvy to a degree never likely for the Canadian *coureur*.

But, especially in comparison with others in like circumstances, the health record of the Hudson's Bay men was astonishingly good. In 1741 a naval expedition commanded by Christopher Middleton, a former employee of the Company, experienced and very sensible, wintered at Churchill River alongside the Company's post. Scurvy and frost-bite took their toll of the naval men; by the end of winter eleven of them were dead, others sore stricken. At one period twenty-five of them were out of action, and when spring came the crews were 'such poor scorbutick Creatures' that it was a wonder they could make sail at all. The experience was repeated four years later with another exploring party (this time wintering in Nelson River). On both occasions the worst incidence followed the Christmas celebrations, with 'strong beer and brandy every day all the time'.

An even greater example of the dangers brought by scurvy came when, in 1782, a French naval expedition under le Comte de la Pérouse captured the English posts. On arrival the French ships were lousy (which probably entailed typhus), and they were losing two or three men a day from scurvy. Their daily rations were about two ounces of salt beef or salt pork, some boiled beans, some maggoty biscuit 'almost capable to walk by itself', and a dram of bad brandy at each meal. They had no time to recuperate ashore if they were to get out through 'Hudson's Straits' before the sea froze, and by the time they eventually reached Cadiz they had over four hundred sick and had lost seventy men on the flagship alone.

The Hudson's Bay men were, of course, not immune to scurvy. Numerous cases are on record, and at times the work of the posts was at risk. But from their French mentors they knew of spruce beer, so that normally they recovered fairly quickly when stricken, and scurvy only became a serious danger when for some reason their normal routine was broken. In winter 1688-89, for example, eighty-five English were shut up by the French in Albany, and their surgeon was captured. Three men were then killed in action; twenty-five died of scurvy and hardship.

It was, however, not only spruce beer which saved the Hudson's Bay men. They were forced onto a diet in which fresh food played a great part, and at least their employers realized its value even if the men may not have done so. From the start, peas and mustard were sown and reaped; hens, hogs and goats were shipped out; currants, raisins and 'fruit' were provided; Indian corn was got from Virginia and garden seeds of all kinds were persistently tried out. As early as 1674 forty gallons of lime juice, three hogsheads of vinegar and 'a proportionable quantity' of onions were sent, and a report of 1682 recorded that turnips and colewort had been grown and were 'a great refreshing to the men, many of them sick of the scurvy'. It is notable that the sickness referred to had been contracted during the comparatively brief voyage from England, not during the long northern winter.

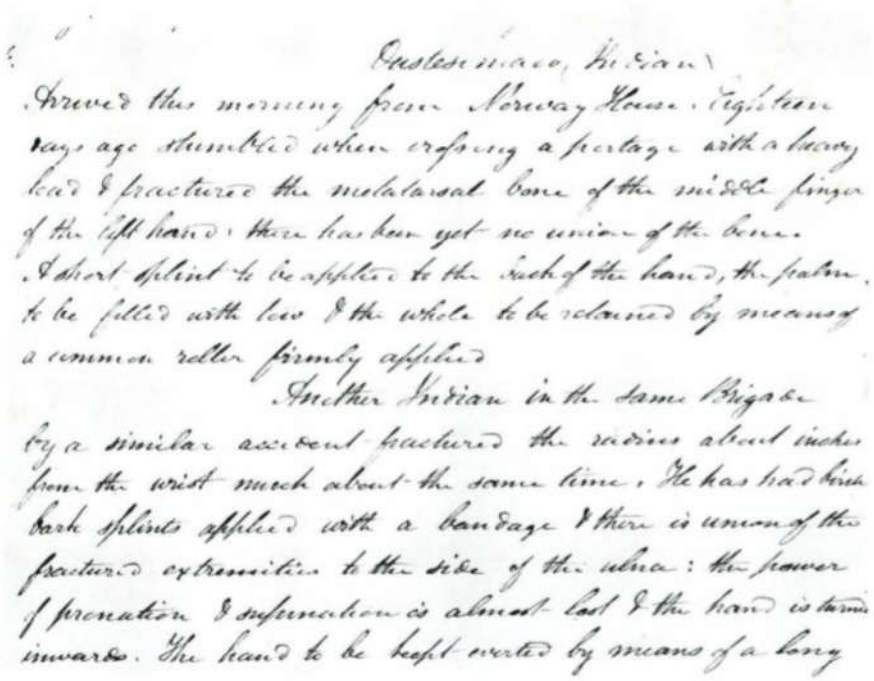
The constant shipments of seeds — onions, carrots, lettuce, spinach, radishes, beans, peas, as well as of barley, oats, rye, and wheat — were undertaken in the conviction that fresh food was necessary for health. But the shipments were also part of an endless campaign to cut the costs of provisions; and garden produce was not the only substitute for European food. The posts were forced, by meagre shipments of European provisions, to rely heavily on the fowl, game and fish, which periodically abounded. With the weekly ration set in 1685 at five pounds of flour and five pounds of meat for each man, the migrant herds of deer, the flocks of geese and of partridges, and the superabundance of fish made supplementation by fresh food easy as well as necessary. In a single day two hundred partridges might well be killed at one post; 90,000 partridges and 25,000 hares might be eaten during a winter. Four or five thousand geese might be taken at a post in the course of their two

At Prince of Wales's Fort, the men took four or five thousand geese during the two seasons of migration. In this engraving, after a drawing by Samuel Hearne, Company servants are seen shooting the birds for fresh food.

migrations (northerly in spring and southerly in fall), and swans, 'exceeding fat' plover, and deer supplemented them. Normally such food would keep fresh through the seven months of winter; and the simple device of the ice-house, with its insulation of thatch and brushwood, helped through the summer months. But if the deer were caught at a river-crossing (as they very often were) they were slaughtered by the Indians in such numbers that much of the meat was wasted. So, wrote Chief Factor James Isham 'it's either a feast or a famine'. Over 5,000 carcases were brought into Prince of Wales's Fort during winter 1722-23, and that post had been known to expend four hundred partridges a week for eight months out of the twelve.

The meat available would seem to have been a very adequate supplement to the men's rations. But fish, rather than meat, was always accepted as the 'Staff of life' at the Hudson's Bay posts. Pike, trout, perch, salmon, sturgeon were all available, but the tickameg or whitefish dominated. Slightly larger than a mackerel, tickameg could be netted in thousands as they came into the rivers to spawn in the summer. Fourteen thousand laid down before winter set in would be needed if fish was to be fed to the men on three days a week, but with more than a thousand sometimes taken with one draught of the seine net this was not an impossible figure. The whitefish, moreover, were not confined to coastal waters. They could be got, sometimes, in great numbers in the rivers and the lakes and there were so many other fish available that even when the Company gave up its 'Sleep by the Frozen Sea' and sent its men up the rivers to oppose the traders from Canada on the Saskatchewan, in Athabasca and on the Pacific Slope, fish remained the staple of their diet. At such posts, with an additional haul of anything between six hundred and two thousand miles to add to the arguments against European food, ability to live off the country was essential, and though moose and deer flesh, geese, partridges and rabbits, were hunted and traded, fish was the mainstay. So much was this the case that it became a cause for complaint, the men declaring that 'where the living is mostly fish they will not go to'.

To modern ears the men's complaints seem not unreasonable. When, for example, Matthew Cocking reached Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan in October 1775 he reckoned that he had travelled 676 miles, with 63 carrying places, in six weeks. He had been outfitted with very little food, had traded meat and fish with Indians as he travelled, and he arrived to find that Samuel Hearne (who had established the post in 1774) had left almost no provisions. Trading and hunting, and sending men out to 'Tent and try to procure Provisions', brought some relief. But fishing merited almost a daily note in the Journal of the post, and by the end of the year frequent catches of sturgeon had brought safety. In all, 165 sturgeon were taken at Cumberland House during that winter, and in January a visiting rival recorded that Cocking had very little provisions and that



Oustesimaca, (Indian)
Arrived this morning from Norway House. Eighteen days ago stumbled when crossing a portage with a heavy load & fractured the metatarsal bone of the middle finger of the left hand. There has been yet no union of the bone. A short splint to be applied to the back of the hand, the palm to be filled with tow & the whole to be retained by means of a common roller firmly applied.

Another Indian in the same Brigade by a similar accident fractured the radius about inches from the wrist much about the same time. He has had birch bark splints applied with a bandage & there is union of the fractured extremities to the side of the ulna: the power of pronation & supination is almost lost & the hand is turned inwards. The hand to be kept averted by means of a long

Six medical journals covering the years 1846-1852 in York Factory survive in the Company Archives. This entry was made in July 1847 by Dr W. Smellie.

It reads as follows:

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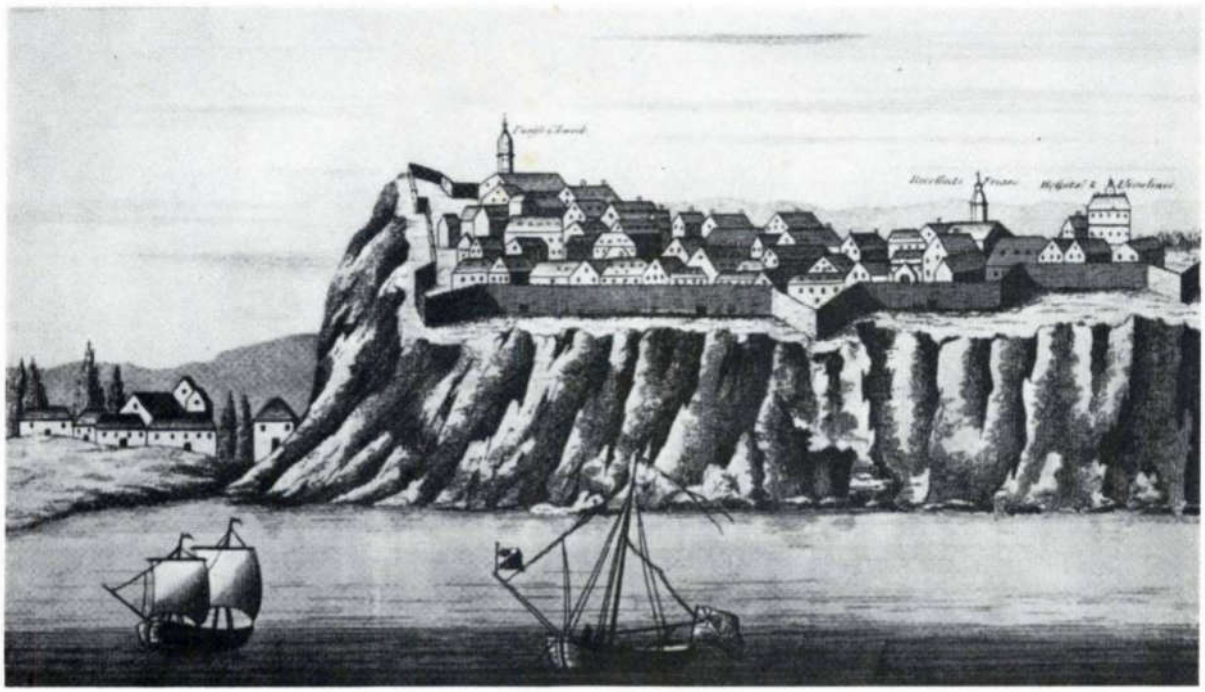
'Himself and his men subsisted wholly upon fish, in which sturgeon bore the largest proportion'.

As the Company developed its posts across the prairies the so-called 'meat posts' at Carlton House, Edmonton and Peace River took their places in the organization, and pemmican was supplied by them as a sort of emergency ration, especially for use when travelling; and as the system improved and agricultural experiments prospered, flour, oatmeal, barley, and rice were taken inland in limited quantities, again for use as an 'iron ration' in emergencies. But fish remained all-important. 'Whitefish is the Mainspring of our Existence' wrote George Simpson in 1821, after his first winter in the interior. Every post, said he, should carry a year's supply of twine, so that the fall fishing could be completed without waiting for supplies to come up from the coast. 'A sufficient quantity of fish should be taken in the fall for the maintenance of the people during the winter; they cannot expect meat except by way of treat on particular occasions'. Simpson's own fishery at Fort Wedderburn had been twenty miles distant from the post, and not always successful. By February he reckoned that he had only one day's supply in hand, and his fishery was producing only 150 fish a day against a daily requirement of 200 (for 44 men). But with 'no less than ten men strolling about the country in quest of their subsistence as we cannot maintain them here, and those about the post half starved' Simpson and his men survived, he boasting that he could eat whitefish with any *voyageur*.

Though expansion across the prairies and to the Pacific slope made buffalo meat, pemmican and agricultural produce available, so that the Company could even accept a contract to supply the Russian posts to the north, fish maintained its primacy; only, across the Rockies salmon took the place of whitefish. Fort Alexandria, for example, consumed over 10,000 salmon with a complement of twelve adults and five children in 1827. A post of twelve to fifteen men needed at least 12,000 salmon a year, and the ration was three salmon a day for a man, two for a woman and one for a child. Transposing salmon for whitefish, this was much the same allowance as had been given at the Bottom of the Bay a hundred years earlier; and, midway between, the Parliamentary Enquiry of 1749 was told that the common provisions were flesh and fowl, and that there was no bread except what was brought from England. There were normally two years' supplies of provisions kept in the posts, but privations could occur and there was even a report of one man dying from starvation (though he got the same rations as the rest and there was no shortage of food at the time). The standard ration at that time was six pounds of flour a week, with a daily issue of perhaps three-quarters of a goose, half a pint of peas and small beer; perhaps three partridges instead of the portion of goose, or perhaps an issue of cheese and butter instead. Under a generous factor the men might get two or three extra pieces of salt beef or pork a week, and when venison was available a daily ration would be about three pounds.

This seems a reasonably substantial diet, even reasonably varied, at least in theory. But variety depended on



In 1668 'Peter Romulus the French Surgeon' – Pierre Romieux of Trois Rivières – was engaged to sail on the 'Nonsuch'. This early sketch of Trois Rivières shows the Hospital of the Ursulines (right).

what happened to be available and, as at the fish posts, monotony was always imminent although the men could cook their food to their own taste in their four-man messes; the effective choice was between roasting, spit-grilling and boiling. 'Treats', moreover, were remarkable more for the quantity of food supplied than for any change in quality or variety. On Christmas Day 1705, each four-man mess at Albany was issued 20 lbs of flour, 2 lbs of bacon, 8 pints of oatmeal, 2 pints of rice, 2 lbs of raisins, ½ lb of currants, 8 lbs of mutton, three fresh geese and two salt, twelve partridges, a piece of salt beef, sixty fish, 4 lbs of biscuit bread, 1½ lbs butter, 2 lbs of cheese and 3 lbs of suet! The chances of hard times could never be overlooked. But this was a profusion which could not be expected by working men in Europe, and the normal rations, monotonous and sometimes limited as they were, provided a natural diet which played its part in maintaining the health of the men and in making the medicaments shipped out from England of far less day-to-day importance than they would otherwise seem to be. The medicaments, moreoever, cost so little that they cannot have been available in quantities which could have had any major or constant effect on the men's health. That much at least is clear from the documents.

In view of the monotony from which their diet could suffer, and of the meagre amounts of specifics available, the health record of the Hudson's Bay men is the more remarkable because they were not particularly healthy to start with. The 'London childring' of whom John Nixon had complained as early as 1682 were often 'seek of the ould disease, of licentiousness', 'debauched with the voluptuousness of the city', and his advice, to replace them with likely country lads, not acquainted with strong drink, who would work hard and fare hard, perhaps even with Scots, 'hardy people to endure hunger, and cold, and subject to obediance', could not be effectively followed. In any case, as expansion into the interior dictated increases in numbers (from 181 servants in 1772 to 529 by 1779) the recruitment of Orkneymen and Scots does not seem to have had any noticeable effect on the health record.

Neither particularly healthy nor particularly active, the men suffered from the usual ailments of English and Scottish working men – from stone, gravel, 'pains in the breast' and other bronchial troubles, gout, fevers and vapours, scorbutic disorders including scurvy, and the hernias, cancers and venereal diseases, frostbite and snowblindness which from time to time were reported. From the earliest voyages the Committee was aware that there was a health hazard involved in maintaining its small and isolated posts, and that some expenditure on medical care was necessary. So, on the voyage of the *Nonsuch* in 1668, before the Company had even been chartered, 'Peter Romulus the French Surgeon' – Pierre Romieux of Trois Rivières – was engaged. He remained as posts were established until 1674, when he was replaced by Walter Farr, an English surgeon. Farr was only signed on for three years, but he was still there twelve years later and surgeons (sometimes called apothecaries or doctors) continued to be employed in the Bay throughout the Company's history. Indeed,

many of the most competent traders and travellers entered the Company's service by this door. The surgeons having been recruited, they were supplied with medicine chests by the Company, and they were ordered to keep accounts of the ways in which they had expended their store.

But no such accounts have survived, and there is no way of discovering the contents of these early medicine chests. In fact the ships seem to have paid more attention to problems of health than did the posts. In 1680 medicines were bought for the ships but none, apparently, for the posts. But some were sent out in 1682 and in 1689 the Governor at Port Nelson was told 'We understand that you have noe Medicines, yett you write for none, but wee have Sent a very good Chest out of our Care for you'. But while we know that in 1682 three chests and one box of medicines for the ships cost £25, and that medicines for the use of the factories cost £6, and that in 1683 the surgeon was allowed '£8 and no higher' for medicines, we do not know what specifics were then bought. In that year (1683) Thomas Robinson, dwelling at the Sign of the Unicorn in the Strand, was appointed the Company's apothecary, to furnish them with medicines for the Bay. But still there is no knowing what medicines he supplied although a supplementary supply of ointments and plasters was added to the routine indent.

As the unidentifiable boxes of medicines continued to be shipped it would seem, in fact, that ointments and plasters, for use in accidents, took precedence over medicines to overcome diseases. On reflection this would seem natural in the circumstances and conformable with much of contemporary practice and with the ability and qualifications of the surgeons, for they were comparable with the naval surgeons of the period and a typical product of the system had no hesitation at telling the Committee that 'Arithmetick is a thing I will not go to undertake knowing'. For the most part a pint of beer served as a diuretic and (especially if brewed with spruce) an anti-scorbutic, a dram of spirits was proclaimed as a sovereign remedy for all 'melancholik distempers' and 'indeed the couldness of the country requereth it', and the ship's doctors or the post surgeons helped out 'with physic and plasters' or with amputations. So much did ointments and plasters predominate in such a regime that one chief reported that all the medicines were used up, and that nothing could be done unless the men would eat the ointments and plasters!

But over the years details of some medicaments begin to appear – tartar in 1793, apparently for use in brewing also; 'burned sponge', later superseded by iodine in the 1840s; opium as a specific against violent coughs and as a sedative, Spanish flies and blister plasters, hartshorn (rendered useless by frost), lavender water, tincture of rhubarb, 'jalap' (good for nothing), Glauber salts, sulphur, basilicon, powder of rhubarb, 'Spanish juice' and ipecacuanha. There was also a steady supply of a remedy known as Turlington's Balsam, a compound tincture of benzoine sold as a 'Balsam of Life', a cure for stone, gravel, colic and inward weaknesses. The balsam had been granted Royal Letters Patent in 1744, and it continued in demand for over a century. There were twenty-seven ingredients – cinnamon, cloves, nutmegs, juniper, frankincense, myrrh, aniseed, saffron, aloes, mace and liquorice, Peruvian balsam, and balsam of tolu gave it the merits of most overseas spices while nettle seeds, fennel, winter-bark and St-John's-wort gave it the merits of home-grown simples. The whole was carried in a maceration of benzoin in alcohol with liquid storax, and it would seem to have contained a little of almost everything, and to be used for almost everything. Apart from its value as a cure for 'inward weaknesses' it was prescribed as an expectorant cough mixture and as a wound dressing, and it is on record that when Etienne Wadin had been mortally wounded by Peter Pond in 1783 he asked for 'le Boam Turleton' to staunch the flow of blood.

The balsam did not save Wadin's life; but it continued in demand and was among the medical supplies with which John Rae was equipped when he set out on his arctic journey of 1846-47. Though Rae developed into a remarkable traveller and surveyor, splendidly competent 'as regards the management of the people and endurance of toil, either in walking, boating or starving' (as Simpson reported), he held an Edinburgh medical qualification and was originally employed by the Company as a surgeon. Muscular and active, full of animal spirits, an excellent rifle-shot, he became one of the best snowshoe walkers in the service, capable of standing an immense amount of fatigue. He actually walked 1,200 statute miles on snowshoes in two months and gained two pounds in weight as he did so. He was outstanding; but he was typical of the Hudson's Bay men, as distinct from the naval exploring parties whose lavish equipment and large ideas they derided, in travelling with very few provisions and in relying on his gun. For his 1846 journey, apart from the Balsam of Life, Rae took only some essence of peppermint, some castor oil, gum arabic, two dozen purges, a dozen vomits, epsom salts, some plasters ('spread' and 'blister'), some calomine ointment, some basilicon ointment, some Saturnine ointment, a lancet, some liniment and some lint. When he set forth in 1853, on the journey on which he got the first authentic news of the fate of Franklin's expedition, he did not take any balsam, but castor oil and Epsom salts again figured as did the ointments, basilicon, calomine and Saturnine. Spermaceti ointment then found a place, as did calomel powder, while tincture of opium and powdered opium, olive oil as a salve and croton oil as a cathartic, made their appearance, and colocynth pills replaced the vomits and the purges of the earlier journey.

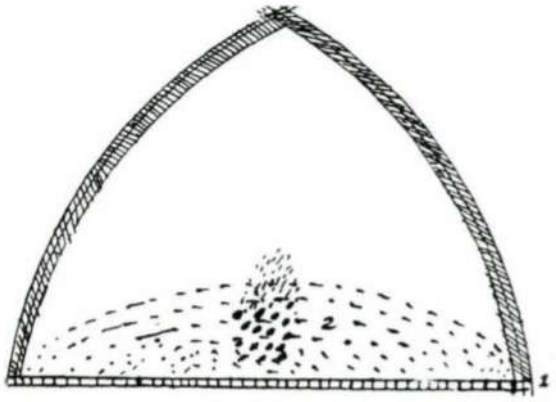
There is of course exceptional interest in the medicaments taken by such an outstanding person as John Rae,

The Company discouraged but could not control liaisons between its men and Indian women. William Richards, who did this water-colour drawing of 'A man & wife returning with a load of Partridges from their tent', was a 'Native of Hudsons Bay', employed by the Company in the James Bay area between 1804-1811.

especially in view of his professional qualification. The striking fact about his equipment is the simplicity of the commonplace remedies which he favoured. But this may have been – probably was – due at least in part to the limited supplies from which he could draw; and it probably owes something to the attitude which he adopted. His lists are, in any case, not exhaustive; other remedies were used from time to time. In the early nineteenth century Anderson's pills (a nostrum for general use) made their appearance; they continued in demand for many years, while balsam polycrestinum ran on continuously and laudanum, other tinctures of opium and powdered opium, itself remained the constant, and easily portable, anaesthetics and soporifics, invaluable where the only treatment known for frostbite (if scarification and brute healthiness did not work a cure) was amputation before gangrene set in. Gum arabic appears from time to time but more constant was gum guajaci, which can be identified in shipments of the middle-eighteenth century and which was in general use for treatment of venereal diseases.

Mercury also was used for this purpose, and the calomel and calomel ointments which were in demand were in fact compounds of chloride of mercury. Mercury was the standing antidote in use in the navy; so much so as to arouse criticism and controversy. It probably was among the unidentified medicines shipped out as contents of the medicine chests though no record has yet come to hand of a particular consignment of mercury. But mercury was certainly available in the Bay, for experiments to freeze it were brought to a successful conclusion in 1782; and although searches for precious metals were conducted from time to time, with crucibles and borax sent out to try the ores, the Company used to ship the ores home as ballast for their ships and to smelt them under their own supervision, so that mercury was not sent out for metallurgical use. It may be surmised that the mercury which was available for experiments had, in fact, been sent out for medical use, primarily for treatment of venereal disease.

Partly from moral attitudes, the Committee had been worried over the incidence of venereal disease among its men from the earliest times. The moral principles were felt the more strongly because sick men could not do their work, and because cohabitation with Indian women resulted in 'Indian families' which could become liabilities in a variety of ways, not least in their requirements for provisions. The 'Old Disease' comes into the documentation as early as 1682, and continues intermittently throughout, with useless men, 'Poxt to a great Degree', in a miserable condition on arrival, poor helpless creatures fit for no manner of service, posing problems as difficult as those of the servants who were less honest than many who had been hanged at Tyburn.



Isham's drawing of 'A sweeting house' from his observations made at Prince of Wales's Fort 1743-49.

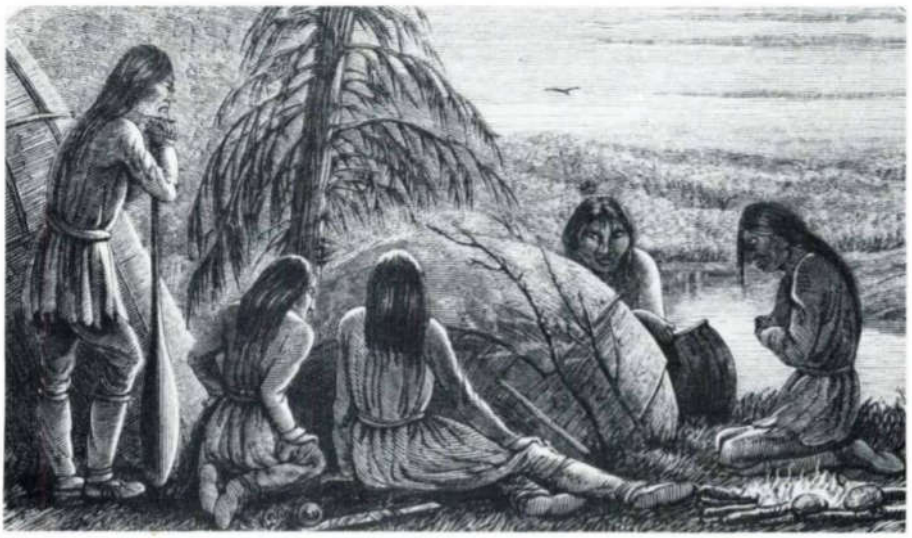
Occasional recoveries are on record, and the standard remedies were on hand though little or no mention is ever made of the treatment given. But men could, and did, remain sick and off duty throughout a whole winter although the remedies were available at their post and were even supplied to rival Canadian traders who called in, stricken with the complaint, to ask for help. Docking of wages, extra payments to the surgeons (deducted from the men), punishments for concealment, examinations before the ships sailed, all were tried and none succeeded.

The problem continued, exacerbated by the impossibility of imposing continence and by Indian habits and attitudes, they being 'Lewd from the cradle'. One Chief, reporting that he had sent home a man who had brought the disease from England, dwelt on his fear 'lest he should Touch with the Natives which may prove of Ill consequence to the Company', and Andrew Graham wrote in his *Observations* that venereal disease was common among the Indians, both inland and at the coast, though mild in its symptoms. He added that it originated in intercourse with European traders, both Hudson's Bay men and the 'people of Canada', and that the Factors kept their bedfellows in the posts constantly, and 'for the most part at proper times' (whatever that may mean) they allowed their men to take in 'an Indian lady' provided she did not stay overnight in the post. When journeys away from the posts were undertaken the Company's men travelled Indian fashion, at least until a regular service had been established, and a woman was almost a necessary article of equipment for travel of that sort. Continence, in short, was hardly to be expected, the 'foul disease' was common and the occasional cure would seem to be due either to natural resistance or to the mercury and the guiacum which were certainly available.

Whether the 'foul disease' was really brought to the Indians by Europeans is an interesting question to which no satisfying answer has yet been made. Apart from this, they seem to have suffered chiefly from respiratory disorders – which may also have been brought from Europe. In early reports they were said to live to great ages and to suffer from few diseases except colds which (like their lewdness) were largely due to indulgence in spirits supplied by the traders. Later reports stated that they did not live to great ages but that their disorders were few – flux, consumption and 'pains in the breast' supposed to be caused by cold air being drawn into the lungs and impeding the circulation of blood. Their remedies depended for the most part on 'sweating' in a kind of sauna bath and on bleeding, with amputations for frostbite and serious wounds and with ointments made of turpentine and buffalo or deer fat for sores, cuts and bruises. They used a decoction of pine buds or a dressing of the inner bark of the juniper to cure their venereal disorders.

Normally the Indians faced their ailments with fortitude; they showed great powers of recovery unless some psychological factor upset them; and they wrought some notable cures from time to time. Indeed, they were sometimes called in to 'cup' Europeans, and the Company's servants were not above using Indian remedies. The plunge into icy water or snow after treatment in the 'sweathouse' was not adopted. It proved too much of a shock and the only Englishman reported to have tried it fell down unable to stand it. 'Such methods' wrote James Isham 'with Some Europeans would be present Death'. As Europeans adopted Indian cures they often did so in their own way. 'Wishakapucka' or Labrador tea was used by Indians as a purge or as a fomentation. The English made a brew of tea from the plant, found it palatable, and used it as a sedative which, with constant use (a pint a day, made strong, for three months!) was held to cure 'Nervious Disorders'. Wishakapucka certainly won the approval of the traders. Laced with rum, it was recommended by Graham as a curé for 'the Country Disorder'. Umfreville found it aromatic and noted that it strengthened the stomach, relieved the head, promoted perspiration, was very serviceable in rheumatic cases, and that it could be applied to gangrenes, contusions and, in powder form, to excoriations. But in general the English were cynical about Indian cures. They reported on the sweating system that they never knew it to do either good or harm, and they watched the Indians using their local herbs with suspicions enhanced by the faith which the Indians showed in their 'conjurers' and by the use which the latter made of European remedies when they could get hold of them.

'A Factor who deals and talks with them in the Doctor's way is much thought of' wrote Andrew Graham, and it was a commonplace that many traders 'quacked' medicines to Indian doctors or conjurers. The transaction would be surrounded with a great deal of



'The Conjuror in his Vapour-bath' from H.Y. Hind's book on the Labrador, 'the country of the Montagnais and Nasquapee Indians'.

A Cree medicine bag.

secrecy, to build up the reputation of the Indian, and in the practice of his art he used the psychological approach with inherited skill. Care was taken to give nothing which could do harm, but sugar, ginger, barley, sulphur, spices, liquorice, snuff, camphorated spirit, basilicon and other ointments, and adhesive plasters were 'quacked', and the Indian followed up the ceremonial dealings in which he acquired these drugs by administering them in a routine of 'pranks' and 'very Umersome' actions which added to his stature and impressed his patient. Some remarkable cures were achieved by these methods.

Certainly the Indians, especially the Crees who were those who would be the ones most under discussion by the Hudson's Bay men, were not disdainful of medicines despite the fact that they accepted pain, illness, mutilation and death with remarkable stoicism. There is a record of a Northern Indian (a Chipewyan) who died of a 'lingering decay' at Churchill in 1772. He was kept in a cool place until the surgeon got back to the post from a journey he had undertaken and then 'by the desire of the natives as well as the surgeon's and mine', wrote the Chief Factor, 'the surgeon opened the body' to find the lungs decayed, the liver and spleen ulcerated, findings conducive to 'an inflammatory fever and shortness of breath, a general disorder that the natives dies of after a long while'. The dissection was 'surprisingly satisfactory to the Natives that was present'.

Tuberculosis was common among Indians; but it was not the only killer disease by any means. Measles broke out in an epidemic which almost exterminated some bands in 1820 and again in 1821 and in 1845. Europeans and Indians alike went down to influenza in 1835. Whooping cough ran riot from time to time. And, as is often the outcome when the European brings his medical skills to non-European peoples, diseases were at times attributed to white magic, white immunity became a great and dangerous cause of jealousy, and remedies which involved strong and painful reactions were particularly suspect.

Smallpox emphasizes these considerations. The disease was probably brought to the Atlantic coast of America in the early days of European contact and by the early seventeenth century it had spread down the coast with devastating effect. When the Pilgrim Fathers went ashore in 1621, for example, they arrived on the heels of a three-year epidemic which had resulted in close to 90 per cent casualties among the coastal tribes. This holocaust, wrote the Puritan Johnson, was part of 'The Wonderful Preparation the Lord Christ by His Providence wrought for His People's Abode in this Western World', for it meant that the Pilgrims met no opposition; indeed, that they could reap where the Indians had sown. For the corn stood unharvested, the wigwams were filled with corpses, the fields, littered with carcases, seemed a 'new-found Golgotha'. The Indians had no resistance to the disease, such as the Europeans had acquired, and epidemic followed epidemic, up and down the continent.

From the point of view of the fur trade, the two most notable smallpox epidemics are those of 1781-82 and of 1869-70. The 1781-82 outbreak spread northwards from the Mississippi, carried by marauding war-parties and by bands of Indians as they fled before the disease. Indians did not believe that one man could give the disease to another, any more than a wounded man could give his wound to another. But they fled before it, and in fleeing they spread it. The Indians of the Upper Saskatchewan were affected by mid-October, 1781, and by the New Year smallpox was rampant throughout the Northwest. Whole tribes were almost exterminated, families were left unburied in their tents to be preyed on by wild

The apothecary shop at Fort William was located in Dr John McLoughlin's house, to the right of the main gate. From a water-colour of Fort William by Robert Irvine, c.1812.

beasts, and starvation ensued from the lack of hunters since the grown men suffered most, largely because they continued with their normal activities right up to the point of physical exhaustion. From the heart of the epidemic, at Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan, William Tomison wrote that they had no medicines fit for that disorder; and indeed none was known in 1781. The English fumigated with sulphur, but that cannot have been the cause of the remarkable difference in the incidence of the disease. For the English and half-breed servants of the Company associated freely with stricken Indians and even went so far as to strip furs from corpses (replacing with duffel cloth!) in order to recover debts due to the Company. Nevertheless not one of the Company men caught the disease, except Charles Isham (son of York's former governor, James Isham) and though partly of Indian blood, he recovered. 'There is something very malignant, that we are not sensible of, either in the Constitution of the Natives or in the Disorder', wrote Tomison, and it would seem indisputable that the Indians were far less resistant than the Europeans, many of whom would have acquired an immunity by contact with the disease in their childhood.

Minor outbreaks of smallpox occurred from time to time, but the next major epidemic was in 1869-71, again with the posts on the Saskatchewan most seriously affected. Again, the disease was reputed to have been brought up from the south, this time from Americans on the Missouri, carried by Blackfoots and Piegans to the prairies. But the Indians blamed the fur traders and were outraged by the comparative immunity of the whites. By 1869 vaccination was widely known and practised as a preventive, and the Company had been in correspondence with the London Vaccine Institute since 1838, sending out quantities of vaccine and instructions for administering it. Inevitably activity increased whenever there was a scare and died down in times of immunity. An outbreak in 1857, for example, resulted in pressure for vaccination at Fort Garry and in all the children at Moose being treated. The 1869 outbreak produced a campaign for vaccination in Mackenzie River District; and this time the traders were told that smallpox was such a contagious disease that it would be dangerous to trade furs or leather or provisions made and dressed by affected Indians.

But still, at that comparatively late date, medical treatment and the attitudes which went with it marked an important cultural boundary between the English and the Indians. The uneven incidence of disease, the gulf in treatment and the difference in outcome, marked a racial barrier. The Indian 'never ill with the casual illnesses of our civilization' contributed much to the toll which diseases took, swimming rivers, lying out in the open country and facing the full rigours of the way of life which he followed, when his fevers were at their height, and often expiring as he did so.

The contrasts reveal deep and important considerations but they must not be pressed too far. Indeed, not the least significant outcome of an attempt to evaluate the differences between Indian and European attitudes is that the European attitudes get brought into focus. Then one realizes that the indifferent documentation on medical matters reflects a measure of indifference by the traders which merits comparison with the stoicism of the Indians. They reckoned to live hard and to face their illnesses with few remedies. Determination was more important than the surgeon's chest. This was a conviction never better put than by James Knight who had been appointed to take over York Fort from the French in 1714, at a time when he must have been sixty years old at least. He had been forty years in the service of the Company (with an interval) and he had been in serious trouble with his health. He found the post which he took over not fit to compare with a cow-house, and in the early summer of 1715 the river brought a vast deluge of water down before the sea had thawed, and flooded the whole area. Knight was forced to take refuge in the woods and to live for a week up trees or on platforms. A

relapse caused by a deluge, a 'great cold' caught then, with no fire or cooked food and 'I must have gone if nature had not been very strong for here was no manner of living without one could swallow a little ointment or salve'. He had lost all his own 'necessaries' (presumably his supplies of spirits) and the doctor's chest of medicines was all expended.

The sturdy old man survived. James Knight came home again and drove a hard bargain with the Committee, and then went exploring to find the Straights of Annian. Nature was indeed strong in him. He was exceptional but by no means unique. George Simpson made a fetish of his ability as a traveller, but he did not set himself up as being less in need of medical care than others. Yet when, in 1822, he went down with an attack of quinsy his references to his sickness were terse and without comment although the treatment he received was to have his throat rubbed with nitric acid in mistake for hartshorn – a mistake which almost killed another man who was given the same treatment and which speaks volumes for the casual attitude to medicaments.

With luck the fur trader might count on good natural health, uncorrupted by city vices; on a dram to keep his spirits up; some purges, emetics and expectorants; and on ointments, salves and balsams to staunch bleeding or to cure rashes or small wounds. For the rest, his life was healthy if exacting; and he usually came from a background in which medical care was meagre, simple and seldom appreciated. As late as 1825 the trader at Rainy Lake gave his view that 'there had been no kind of sickness till Doctors were imported by the Hudson's Bay Company and the late Earl of Selkirk: since then sicknesses increases in proportion with the number of Doctors'. Fort William, he added, was the only unhealthy post which the North West Company had, 'but, indeed, it was the only post where they had an Apothecary'.

This attitude of cheerful indifference verging on scepticism, an attitude which meant that a surgeon would seem to be worth his salt when he became useful as a trader or as a traveller, should be borne in mind as the elusive documentation is under review. Occasionally a full list of medicaments may inspire a professional pharmacist to attempt a detailed appraisal which would be of interest in the history of pharmacy. This happened when one of the very few lists of that quality was displayed by the Company as part of its Tercentenary Exhibition. The list of drugs on hand at Albany in 1730 contains seventy-six items, drugs, salves, ointments and balsams, and it excited the interest of an American pharmacist who printed it, with comments, in the Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine in 1971. The comments are that the plasters (epipastic, oxycot, diachylon gummi and melilot) have almost entirely disappeared from practice, and that this is a loss to patients. The detailed comments, however, are not easy to reconcile with this generalization: – epipastic plaster,

OLD FORT WILLIAM

A view of the hospital in reconstructed Fort William.

containing pitch, wax, turpentine, mustard seed, pepper, verdigris and cantharides, was 'a vesicant we can afford to do without'; oxycot, or saffron, plaster was 'an infrugal and injudicious composition'; diachylon or 'common' plaster was made by boiling lead monoxide (litharge) and 'ordinarily the chief sufferer was probably the pharmacist'! Melitot plaster was made from common clover and seems the only one to which strong objections could not be raised. All the ointments in the list have also become unfamiliar although their ingredients – turpentine, wax, litharge and white lead, myrrh, belladona, zinc oxide and even nicotine, remain in the pharmacopoeia and appear in different forms and different mixtures. Marshmallow root *(radex Althaeae)*, valerian root, peony root, gentian, fennel and other 'simples' have dropped out of use, as has calomel to a large extent. But Peruvian bark and guiacum remain, though the latter is now used as a reagent rather than as a cure for syphilis. 'Most of the remaining preparations' writes the commentator, 'have passed into oblivion'.

This is an example of one professional use which may be made of the information available. It is an invaluable contribution, since the information is so limited in scope and in quantity, and requires such specialized qualifications for this treatment that the layman, the ordinary historian, must be left hoping that he has not misquoted or misunderstood. Such treatment, revealing how little of the remedies then available has been accepted by modern practice, reinforces the feeling that the fur traders were not in error in their attitudes. For them, the surgeon's chest was a luxury; diet was the essence of their problems, and their life by the shores of the Frozen Sea was faithfully reflected by the predominance of dietary documentation over medical, despite the constant care of the Committee. ◆

THE BEST OF BOB EDWARDS

Edited by Hugh A. Dempsey. Hurtig Publishers, Edmonton, Alberta, 1975. 272 pages, $8.95.

Reviewed by Harry J. Boyle

In the thirties, as an underpaid reporter, I had dreams that compensated for low wages and dyspeptic editors. I and most of my associates had not yet aspired to write books. We settled for the hope of some day owning a weekly newspaper where we could raise hob about the conditions of the day. William H. Brann of *The Iconoclast* in Amarillo, Texas, had done it; we conveniently overlooked the fact he was gunned down by an irate subscriber. The man who got away with it was an expatriate Englishman, Bob Edwards, who randomly published *The Eye-Opener* from various Alberta locations including High River and Calgary.

We knew more of the myth than the fact about Edwards. A great uncle coming back to Huron County, Ontario, after an absence of fifty years fired my youthful hunger for adventure with his stories about Michigan lumber camps, Montana ranches, his Navajo bride, homesteading in Alberta, and Bob Edwards. His relationship with Edwards was convivial; their enthusiasm for poking fun at politicians, pretension, and promoters was boundless.

By sheer chance, I started covering Western politicians. They did not see *The Eye-Opener* barbs as directed towards them as a breed, but only at selected targets. A favourite was R. B. Bennett. The times I've heard this story, told to warm up an audience in a sub-zero prairie hall or schoolroom, are beyond totalling:

> 'If you think the CPR and R.B. Bennett are beyond responsibility, let me tell you there's one man who can take them to task. Like the time R.B. was lawyer for the railroad. Bob Edwards was publishing his paper in High River. R.B. was mad. Said every time an engine frightened a horse, or a critter, or grazed one, Bob would run a picture of a horrendous wreck and simply say it was the CPR. So Bennett wouldn't let the candy butchers sell *The Eye-Opener* on CPR trains. Well, Bob ran a picture of Bennett and put a caption under it, "Another CPR wreck." That settled it. The CPR had to start letting Bob sell his papers on the train again.'

Later I learned that Edwards's favourite fictional character was Peter J. McGonigle, B.A. (Boozological Artist). The fact that Mr McGonigle was supposed to come from Huron County, Ontario, and I did also, sealed my prejudice for Edwards. Even the appearance of a distorted *Eye-Opener* after his death, although it dismayed me, failed to destroy my faith.

Leonard Brockington, Austin Weir of the CNR and later the CBC, Len Nesbitt of the Alberta Wheat Pool, and a host of others, contributed their anecdotes to reinforce the image of a man who could only be a folk hero to a person who grew up with a journalistic dream. Of course, there was a lot of myth in the stories, but why not? Canada has always been inclined to short change its 'larger-than-life' citizens. It's a shame because every country to have a living culture must stir some fable, legend, lie and myth in the mix.

Hugh Dempsey's collection *The Best of Bob Edwards* is a splendid effort. Not all the gems sparkle but enough glitter to give you an idea of the range of wit, satire, and wisdom of a man publishing a sporadic weekly in early Alberta who could rouse Lord Strathcona. The nobleman, even in far-off London, couldn't stomach being lumped in with the fictional Mr McGonigle and would have sued until he was told it would be futile.

Amongst the longer items in this book there are short bits with a real bite:

> 'A girl of sixteen pretends to know a lot more than a woman of thirty will admit she knows.'

> 'Politicians resemble shoes in one respect – the higher grade is not machine made.'

> 'Why is it that all the rogues manage to get into the other political party.'

Religion, Clifford Sifton, booze, morality, sex, and a host of other topics were topped off by Edwards. To make a point he slammed friends and enemies but eventually resorted to inventing characters for special purposes, although some were thinly disguised.

The remittance men were treated with a certain amount of latent respect no matter how he lambasted their naivety. Bob Edwards of Scotland, for all his ridicule of the pomp of Empire, had an inner reserve of patriotism. The edds and sods of titled families dispatched to Alberta were inspiration for his pungent prose but he was moved to say they were 'green but not yellow' in enlisting for Mother England. The 'greenhorns' of Alberta were a special breed. They had been bundled off to a new land of opportunity by parents who wanted them out of the way and eagerly took the bait of the unholy land promoters. Reggie or Bertie found out for themselves what 'gopher ranches' meant and many spent the rest of their lives practising their creative skills in cadging money from home for grandiose operations. The money in most cases went to pay bar bills.

I'm glad Dempsey collected this 'sampler'. It reinforces my own conviction that Alberta is one of the richest parts of Canada in human terms. I recall a bunkhouse so many years ago with a lean man having a Missouri drawl who was supposed to have killed a man in a Montana brawl; a quiet Mormon, an expert at breaking horses, who had a Chinese father and a Stoney Indian mother; a Scandinavian who later went into politics, and a runty Englishman who inherited a title he never bothered to use. They were squabbling equals at work, and on Saturday night . . . well, just let someone cross one and he would soon find out about the loyalty of the others.

Somehow, reading *The Best of Bob Edwards* brings back memories of nose-pinching dust, the caress of a Chinook, the raw knife-edge of winter, and the musty, small, dark bar rooms. It reminds you of the pretentious mansions of a time when a rain could make streets into sticky mud soup. The 'girls' were across the river or on the

other side of town in boxy houses with beaded curtains, plush sofas and lamps that cast soft light through fringed tassels. Tenors and contraltos sang opera within ear-shot of the sound of bar-room brawls.

Read *The Best of Bob Edwards.* If you remember his time it will set you off as it did me. If you don't remember then it will at least help you understand a bit about those of us who keep insisting Canada doesn't need to import myths, facts, lies and legends. We have our own and that's what this country's culture is all about, and the sooner we get around to looking at it, the sooner we'll feel more secure in our heritage.

Author, playwright, and humorist Harry J. Boyle is Chairman of the Canadian Radio-Television Commission, Ottawa.

INDIAN ART AND CULTURE OF THE NORTHWEST COAST

By Della Kew and P. E. Goddard. Hancock House, Saanichton, B.C., 1975. 94 pp. soft/hard cover $3.95/$9.95.

Reviewed by Malvina Bolus

Indian Art and Culture is a slightly edited edition of *Indians of the Northwest Coast* by Pliny Earle Goddard, a handbook of the American Museum of Natural History, published in 1924. Goddard, who visited the coast villages with Dr C. F. Newcombe of Victoria one summer, based his book on the publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1897-1902) edited by Professor Franz Boas, who also assisted Goddard. Goddard's book was superseded by Dr Philip Drucker's much more comprehensive *Indians of the Northwest Coast,* AMNH publication of 1955. The present book will in no way supersede Drucker, but it will have a general appeal for the non-specialist, being a pictorial, rather than a technical, presentation.

Within its limitations it gives a fair summary of past, not present, art and culture. Most of the drawings from the earlier book have been reproduced (not always with complete identification) and a great many interesting photographs from early collections added. A little of the original text has been omitted and the judicious tightening up has been to the good, though occasionally there is a slight change of meaning as in the implication (p.41) that eulachon oil was carried by canoe along the grease trails to the interior, where drippings from box and basket marked the way, whereas Goddard makes it clear that oil was also traded along the coast by canoe.

Art comprises a comparatively short part of the text but is exemplified throughout in the illustrations, and crafts are well described. The people and the land are dealt with briefly in an introductory chapter. Mrs Kew wisely does not attempt to cover the early history, as in Goddard, and concerning fauna she improves on him by including shellfish, an important item of diet to the southern peoples, which he overlooks. Not everyone might agree with Mrs Kew's introductory note that the aboriginal inhabitants of the Northwest Coast 'placed great value upon . . . the virtue of benevolence in the disposition of property'. From what one learns, apart from the disposition of family songs and dances, which was governed by rigid custom, property was usually disposed of with an eye to a profitable return – perhaps to placate a spirit when a slave was sacrificed, more often to ensure return with interest of material goods given away at a potlatch.

The chapter on material culture has good coverage of everyday life with great detail on house building (somewhat confusing in spots), fishing, weaving, woodworking and so on, with good illustrations although most of the photographs are too dark. The drawings throughout are nearly all from Goddard's book but lack some detail: in the sketch of canoes on p. 22, the one at the top, a Nootka-type dugout, has the bow to the left; the other, a northern type has the bow to the right, a point of interest but not explained.

Much of the book is devoted to social and political organization, and religious and ceremonial life, tremendously involved subjects in the complex society of the coast groups. Some of this might have been omitted in what must necessarily be a superficial account. To avoid becoming encyclopaedic these have been covered in a fairly general way, with more detailed accounts of some of the customs and ceremonies of specific groups or tribes, which are fascinating in themselves. Social integration and the establishment of rights was an important aspect of the potlatch – a term now familiar but often misunderstood. Explanations of some of the occasions for a potlatch are given. Status and wealth were established by the magnitude of the gifts distributed by the caller of the potlatch and, apart from those made in return for services, other recipients were committed to make an even greater return at some future time, a kind of insurance policy. The omission of 'not' on page 74 where it states 'such gifts could be declined' should be corrected. Gifts might conceivably be declined if there was no possible prospect of making a return, but such an action would bring such shame on an individual that he would no longer be an acceptable member of society. There is no mention that the potlatch, among other ceremonies, was banned by the Canadian government in 1884, with marked effect on the decline of Indian culture.

All in all this is a good introduction to Indians of the Northwest and the illustrations will complement deeper studies. But for continued use better binding is necessary for the paperback because after a few handlings the pages fall out.

Malvina Bolus is the former editor of 'The Beaver'.

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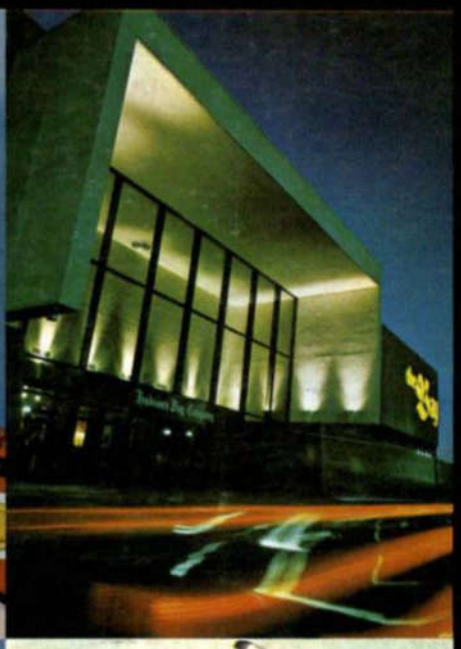

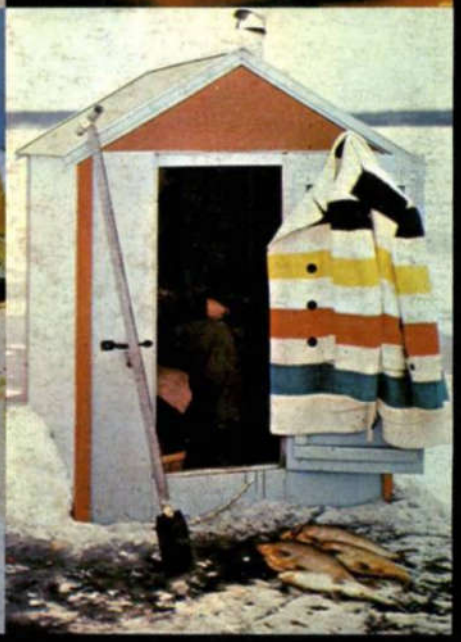

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